

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

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PRESENT STATE OF ENGLAND,

AND THE

INDEPENDENCE of AMERICA.

By THOMAS DAY, Esq;

Vedranfi sanguinose battaglie; inauditi assedii; spaventevoli sacchi, incendii, e rovine; successi maritimi, che d'atrocità non cederano ai terrestri; e non meno atrocemente poi trasportate l'armi da vicini mari d'Europa ne' piu remoti dell' Indie. Uscirà frà l'armi qualche volta ancora il negozio; e frà l'insano strepito della guerra, il desiderio natural della pace. Contuttocio prevaleranno poi sempre le rovine, le morti, e le stragi per ogni canto. *Bentivoglio della guerra di Fiandra.*

Our late delusions have much exceeded any thing known in history, not even excepting those of the crusades. For, I suppose, there is no mathematical, still less an arithmetical demonstration, that the road to the Holy Land, was not the road to Paradise, as there is, that the endless encrease of national debts is the direct road to national ruin — So egregious indeed has been our folly, that we have even lost all title to compassion, in the numberless calamities that are waiting us.

Hume's History of England, Vol. 5. p. 475.

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REFLECTIONS

THE STATE OF ENGLAND

INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA

BY THOMAS DAY

THE
LONDON
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J. JOHNSON, ST. PAULS CHURCH-YARD
1789



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ON THE

PRESENT STATE of ENGLAND, &c.

ENGLAND is now placed in the most critical situation she has ever experienced, since she has possessed that degree of power and pre-eminence which she has held for near a century, amongst the neighbouring nations. Advanced by a variety of causes to that dangerous superiority which never fails to excite the jealousy of every other people, that is placed within the sphere of its attraction, she has not been sufficiently attentive to prevent, by her moderation, that degree of envy which never fails to attend on greatness. Added to this, she has mistaken the very interests of her own ambition ; and, instead of maintaining in perfect vigour those re-

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sources

sources which would have over-awed the jealousy she excited, she has foolishly lavished them in the most wild, unprofitable manner that ever disgraced a nation. The Colonies, whose importance we now too late acknowledge, appear to have been the immediate causes of her greatness. A country prolific in all the articles either of necessity or luxury ; a climate varying through every degree of heat and cold ; an immense ocean every where furnished with ports, and inviting the inhabitants to industry and commerce ; together with that extent of fertile soil which seemed to allow the human species liberty to expand for ages yet to come ; were such advantages as no period of recorded time has ever seen attached to any other people in the universe. When we add to this, an identity of manners, language, prejudices, religion, nay, of interest itself, it must be confessed that we have no reason to expect a similar phenomenon, unless Providence, by the agency of its most powerful instruments of destruction, should confound the pride of man, and lay the world which we inhabit waste, that the human species might begin their course anew.

But what Nature, which has so widely separated the two countries, had failed to do, what the united force of all the Powers of Europe could not have effected, the wild ambition of one part of this nation, assisted by the vanity, blindness, and supineness of the rest, has now

perpetrated: America is now divided from the Parent-Country, and leaves us nothing but the melancholy consolation of reflecting at leisure on what we have lost, or forming schemes which may at best be visionary; and should we fail in wisely managing, the last stake may be fatal.

I will not consume time to enumerate the complicated blessings we have lost, or to execrate the selfish and detestable policy, which, grasping at a toy, has thrown away the noblest empire in the universe. I will confine myself to a single point, in the immense chaos of matter which rises before me, and endeavour plainly and distinctly to state the facts which are most necessary to be understood, and reasoned from, in our present situation.

England is confessedly in the most critical situation she has ever experienced. With ruined resources; her commerce almost annihilated; her best blood lavished on the detestable schemes of private ambition; her colonies exasperated by persecutions and cruelties too shocking to be enumerated, and actually emancipated by successful resistance from her dominion*; her agriculture,

* “ Our colonies, while they have English blood in their veins, and have relations in England, and while they can get by trading with us, the stronger and greater they grow, the more this crown and kingdom will get by them; and
nothing

ture, the prop of every society, impaired ; and her debts encreased almost beyond the possibility of further endurance ; she stands singly forth upon the great theatre of the world, unsupported, unassisted, to contend with three powerful nations, almost as much for existence as for command and glory. The rest of Europe keeps aloof, attentive to the mighty contest, and watching every opportunity to promote its respective interests, by the common mischiefs of the combatants. Nor is this all : every nation has in turn frowned upon the

nothing but such an arbitrary power as shall make them desperate, can bring them to rebel." DAVENANT, vol. 2. p. 10.

" And as care should be taken to keep them obedient to the laws of England, and dependent upon their mother-country, so those conditions, privileges, terms, and charters, should be kept sacred and inviolate, by which they were first encouraged, at their great expence, and with the hazard of their lives, to discover, cultivate, and plant remote places, where in truth they labour as well for us as for themselves, for here at last their treasure centers." Ibid. p. 39.

" Without doubt it is advisable that no little emulations or private interests of neighbours, governors, nor that the petitions of hungry courtiers at home, should prevail to discourage those particular colonies, who, in a few years, have raised themselves by their own charge, prudence, and industry, to the wealth and greatness they are now arrived at, without expence to the crown : upon which account any innovations, or breach of their original charters (besides that it seems a breach of the public faith) may peradventure not tend to the King's profit." Ibid. p. 34.

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British advances, and shewed itself inimical to the cause in which we are engaged; nor can I entertain a single doubt, that had it been necessary to the purposes of the American independence, every other people would have successively come forward, and contended with us for the prize. Nature, or Providence, which directs the passions of nations, like those of individuals, to the advancement of their own interests, has, in this case, proposed two of the most alluring objects which can act upon human avarice or ambition; the abasement of an haughty rival, and the hopes of that immense spoil which the emancipation of America prepares for Europe at large. These dispositions of our neighbours must have been evident, from the very first, to every man who cast the most superficial view upon the state of things, or had the slightest acquaintance with history. The rulers of this country alone appear to have been unacquainted with those truths, which were revealed even to babes and sucklings: they seem to have imagined that France and Spain had forgotten their ancient hatred, their recent wounds; that Holland was become inattentive to her own commercial interests; that every other nation would only see things through the medium of the British Ministry; that every human passion must be hushed, every human interest suspended, while they were permitted to direct the tempests they had raised to the objects of their caprice or hatred.

hatred. I need not here observe how grossly, how fatally they have been disappointed. The final emancipation of America, the degradation of our naval honour, the loss of almost all our European and Western possessions, is the moderate price which this nation has already paid for the implicit confidence which the Sovereign has reposed in his faithful and experienced servants. Let us now enquire what are the measures most likely to procure our safety, amidst these complicated distresses.

The original cause of dispute between England and her Colonies, arose from the claim of the British Parliament to levy taxes upon the Americans, exerted in a trifling duty upon tea, imposed in the year 1767. But when, after the violence of the people of Boston, committed upon the teas of the East-India Company in 1773, several acts had passed the British Parliament, each encreasing in severity, which annulled their government, abolished their Houses of Assembly, deprived them of trial by jury, resigned their lives and property for every and for no offence into the hands of Governors nominated by the Crown; and, last of all, absolutely prohibited all commerce between the two nations, and permitted every act of hostility to be exercised upon them; the original cause of opposition was swallowed up in the immediate necessity of yielding to unconditional submission, or of boldly repelling

pelling force by force. In consequence, therefore, of these precipitate and violent acts of the English Legislature, which seemed to have no other end than the extirpation of all liberty in America, joined with the mighty preparations made in this country to enforce them, the American Congress made a bold appeal to the first principles of human society, declared themselves independent of a country which had destined them to slavery and destruction, and invited the rest of Europe to their alliance and assistance. It is evident, that from this moment the original grounds of the quarrel were changed, and the Americans no longer fought to resist, as subjects, the claim of taxation in the British Parliament, but to defend themselves, as independent nations, from the attacks of an hostile people, that exerted all its force to reduce them to unconditional servitude. On the contrary, the avowed end and object of the war on the side of England was the reduction of so many independent States to its own dominion. The war which was afterwards begun with France has confessedly the same object; since it was not in consequence of any national dispute with that country, but because it supported the freedom and independence of the American States, that England thought it necessary to begin hostilities; and the treaty of alliance which was signed between the French Government and the Congress, on the 6th of January,

1778,

1778, expressly states in the second article, that
 “ the essential and direct end of the present *de-*
 “ *fensive* alliance is, to maintain effectually the
 “ liberty, sovereignty, and independence, abso-
 “ lute and unlimited, of the said United States,
 “ as well in matters of government as of com-
 “ merce.”

Hence it is plain, that the war which Great-Britain has carried on with the Americans was at the beginning, and has been at every instant of its duration, till the last vote of the House of Commons, strictly speaking, an offensive war ; that this offensive war has, in its consequences, embroiled us with France, Spain, and Holland, and still subsists at this moment ; since, however respectable may be the opinion of so uncorrupt an House, it will not, I imagine, be pretended, that it bears the authority of a law, in any other case, than that of *disqualifying* the people from chusing their own *representatives*.

After having given these explanations, in order to produce more clearly my ideas upon the subject, I shall reduce the question to a single alternative : Has Great-Britain absolutely resigned her late ambitious views of conquest, or is she still determined to prosecute the war, till it finally terminate in either her own destruction, or in that of the American States ? In the first case, it will be a consideration well deserving the attention not only of the Government, but of the people

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at large, by what means she may, with the greatest celerity and honour, extricate herself from the fatal labyrinth in which she is involved : in the second, it will *only* be necessary to add thirty millions more to the supplies already voted, to raise sixty or an hundred thousand additional troops ; in order not only to replace those we have lost by sickness, by captivity, by combats, and by desertion, but to enable our Generals to act offensively, with better omens than they have hitherto done. Should we take such vigorous measures as these, notwithstanding the immense difference of the contest, where the overflowing of our gaols, the starving remnants of our manufacturers, and wretched German peasants, reluctantly contend with the best disciplined and most warlike troops, assisted, as often as necessary, by the most numerous militia in the world, and this in their own country, where every thing is equally advantageous to them, and hostile to us ; notwithstanding these immense disadvantages, I should think we might fairly hope, by the end of another campaign, for this is already lost, to be in possession of another post ; at least, if we add to the spirited exertions I have already mentioned, a fleet of forty sail of the line, to prevent the French from pouring in their forces, and turning the balance in a critical moment.

But if these ideas are now reputed chimerical, and the experiment of a farther offensive war be

rejected with abhorrence, not only by all discerning minds, but by our present Government, supported by a large majority of the people, I apprehend it will be necessary to enquire, what will prove the most effectual and speedy means of producing that peace, which is now become so necessary to our situation.

Those that have done me the honour to read this crude essay with attention, will here, I imagine, anticipate the obvious answer which presents itself. For if the original and continued cause of war has been the attempt of Great-Britain to subjugate the Independent States of America to her dominion; if farther, Great-Britain, contented with the losses she has sustained, finds herself in no condition to prosecute the claim, and is resolved to desist from an offensive war in America; it will necessarily follow, that the first thing to be done is solemnly to desist from the claim; and, in desisting, to acknowledge the Independence of America. By this one act, England removes every cause of animosity from between herself and the American States. By this one act she places herself upon the broad foundation of equity and reason; frees herself from the necessity of garrisoning posts and cities which she cannot hold; is more collected for the defence of herself and her own undoubted rights; and ceases to appear to

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the rest of Europe in the formidable light of an insolent, unjust, and rapacious conqueror.

It may be here observed, that should we take these steps; should we even abandon New-York and Charlestown, which I should certainly think expedient to be done; the Americans are so involved by the 8th article of the Treaty of Alliance, that they can make no separate peace without the permission of the French. I answer, that I think all ideas of peace which are not equitable and general, and which do not extend to all the nations with whom we are at variance, are more calculated to please a party, or serve a Minister, than to extricate the English people from their present complicated distresses.

Since the beginning of the present fatal contest, placed as I am at a distance from the little interests and paltry ambition which dazzle so many eyes, and turn them aside from the real pursuit of their country's welfare, I have remarked with wonder, the gross falsities and impostures which have so often been current in this metropolis; and I must own, that I have sometimes been led to suspect, that Heaven, in bereaving this country of her former glory, was kindly preparing its inhabitants for the stroke, by depriving them of their senses. For to what causes short of infatuation, can we attribute the various opinions which have prevailed at different periods of this disastrous contest, that the Americans

would never look the British soldiery in the face ; that a few regiments would complete the reduction of that immense continent ; that a majority of the Americans were attached to the British government ; that the exchanging Philadelphia for Charlestown was the subjugation of America ; that Lord Cornwallis with an army of about ten thousand men could penetrate and subdue all the Southern provinces ; that the French would never assist the Americans ; and that all the nations of Europe would tamely suffer our maritime tyranny, and the piracies of our privateers ? To these might be added, were it necessary to swell the catalogue, many sentiments and observations of Lords and great men of distinguished abilities and importance ; such as the opinion of a great Law-lord, that the war in America was a defensive war ; the humane declaration of a late American Secretary, that the Americans should be decimated with *more* than Roman severity ; and his assertion, that though the Americans had neither money or credit, the English Government could raise troops amongst them cheaper than the Congress. To these might be added, the observation of a noble Lord, about six weeks before the surrender at York-town, who, speaking of the Americans, said, with an air of triumph, “ *Ils sont au desespoir* ; and we are just going to establish the civil government ; ” of another, who after that surrender affirmed, “ that none but
British

British fools would be frightened at the loss of a few thousand troops ;” and the opinion of the greatest financier this country has ever seen, “ that it was necessary to maintain posts in America, for the sake of *commerce*.”

However extravagant these opinions and assertions, when thus crowded together, must appear, I believe there is no man moderately versed in the politics of this nation, during the last ten years, who has not seen them adopted as the principles of our public conduct, or avowed by some of the most distinguished characters in the nation, as necessary to be adopted ; nor should I repeat them, in the midst of so important a disquisition, if I did not dread that some new delusion might arise, deprive us of all our present hopes, and plunge us in deeper misery than we have yet experienced. The prejudice which, I must confess, I more particularly dread at present is, that the Americans may be induced to accept of peace, without our acknowledging their independence, and without our comprehending their allies. Whence this opinion should originate, unless from the selfish designs of some men to consult their own avarice or ambition, at the hazard of plunging this country a-new into all the horrors of an inveterate civil war, and from the general inattention of this people to procure genuine information, I own I cannot comprehend. But to those who have only embraced these dangerous opinions, because they are not used to reflect

fleet for themselves, I would propose the following considerations: Did not the Americans, when placed out of the English protection by the act which prohibited all commerce with them as subjects, and permitted every species of hostility to be exercised upon them as enemies, solemnly declare themselves Independent States, by a vote of Congress, dated July 4, 1776? Were all the subsequent successes of the British arms, when Sir William Howe, with an armament capable of carrying terror with it into the most powerful European nation, had landed upon Long Island, defeated all opposition, and seemed to be triumphantly proceeding through the country, capable of determining that body to rescind their vote? Nay, when it was the opinion not only of the majority of the English, but even of the greater part of Europe, that they must fall a prey to the immense exertions which were made against them, did a single State swerve from the general confederacy, or abjure the independence which they had declared?

If such was the inflexible resolution shewn by the Congress and the American States, when the progress of the British arms on every side seemed to have prevented all future resistance, and to have left them no other alternative than death or servitude; when not an European nation had acknowledged their independence, or seemed inclined to share their dangers, by encountering
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the vengeance of their mighty foe; their resolution and perseverance have not appeared less uniform in that change of fortune which succeeded.

In the Autumn of the year 1777, the brave and unfortunate General Burgoyne surrendered to the American militia at Saratoga, exhibiting a fatal example of the uncertainty of military glories, and the vanity of popular prejudices. About the same time the decided intentions of the French to support the independence of America became apparent: and the abatement of the lofty pretensions of the British Ministry to unconditional submission, produced the famous Conciliatory Bill, which passed March 2, 1778. Those who remember the frantic exultations of a considerable party of this nation at the successes which had attended General Howe in the Autumn of the year 1776, or considered the silent contempt with which the American Petitions had been received at a still earlier period, could not but deplore the fallen state of their country, which, in a space of little more than two years, had exhibited every degree of insolent despotism and abject meanness. When the Americans had called upon the British nation by every tie of friendship, interest, and consanguinity, to prevent the wild waste of blood and happiness which was to ensue; when they stated their complaints with moderation,

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or petitioned with temper for redress, it was deemed unworthy the dignity of the British Parliament to hear their reasons, consider their intreaties, or even to return an answer. The pretended representatives of a nation which dares to claim freedom as its right, publickly refused to three millions of men the licence to state their grievances, or implore redress: and the professors of a religion promulgated by the lowest orders of men, which breathes an universal spirit of peace and equality, and ordains, that he that is highest shall minister to his brethren even in the most servile offices of life, dared to treat their fellow-creatures as if they neither owned a common nature or Creator with themselves. In the same spirit were the commissions framed which accompanied those surer agents of peace, as it was then imagined, the military force. The commissions granted to General Howe gave him no other power than that of pardoning all treasons and misprisions of treason, upon proper submission made to him by the Americans. This amazing condescension towards men who contended that they were only supporting their own just rights, and who believed, that they had only taken up arms to avoid the last conditions of shame and servitude, was attended with all the effect that its contrivers probably intended,—fresh indignation and hatred on the part of the Americans, who determined rather

to perish in one general wreck, than meanly solicit pardon, where they owned no fault, and had themselves complained of injury. Yet notwithstanding those lofty vaunts and arrogance of the British Ministry and Parliament; notwithstanding the repeated victories which had attended our arms, and the utter ruin and despair of the republican party in America, which was propagated and asserted in every corner of this island, we find the second set of Commissioners, on the 9th of June, 1778, offering such terms to the rebellious colonies, as were not only infinitely beyond their own desires in 1775, but such as scarcely left to this country the shadow of authority over her revolted children. It may deserve the consideration of those gentlemen, who seem to imagine, that the Americans are to be drawn from their declared independence, from their solemn alliances, from their purposes avowed to Europe and all the world, by the first gracious overtures of a new Administration, to consider what was the declaration of the American Congress, dated April 22, 1778, upon the subject of this very commission. They declared, "That any man, or body of men, who should presume to make any separate or partial convention or agreement with Commissioners under the Crown of Great-Britain, should be considered and treated as enemies to the United States. That the United States could not with propriety hold any con-

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ference or treaty with any Commissioners on the part of Great Britain, unless they should, as a preliminary thereto, either withdraw their fleets and armies, or, in positive and express terms, acknowledge the independence of the said States." The answer of the Congress was exactly conformable to this declaration, and the whole negotiation ended in the continuance of the war, and the abandoning of Philadelphia, as a preliminary to the total subjugation of America.

If such has been the inflexible spirit of America, during every period both of adverse and prosperous fortune, I would wish to know upon what those gentlemen found their opinions, who seem to imagine that the Americans will now treat with England on terms short of independence? — Have our arms been attended with such decisive successes as may inspire this confidence? Have so many nations acceded to our alliance, as may inspire them with doubt and terror? Is it the formidable state of our navy, our finances, or the internal proofs of virtue and consummate abilities which we have displayed to Europe, that support this opinion? Or is it our brilliant successes against the *perfidious* Dutch, a new enemy flung into the preponderating scale, and that master-piece of British valour and policy, the capture of St. Eustatius?

I am the more interested in bringing forward facts like these to the public attention, because
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I have repeatedly seen the moment of peace and reconciliation flung away, by refusing those concessions which would have purchased them. Had we condescended, in 1775, to consider the American petitions, and grant redress; had we, in 1776, instead of pardoning, in the true spirit of a lawyer, reason and misprision of treason, offered them security for the contested points, there can be little doubt that the war would have been either prevented, or speedily concluded. Let the British nation beware how, for the third time, they lose the moment of security which is placed within their power, light up the flame of civil war anew, and expose themselves to suffer, in turn, the evils they have been so long inflicting. Let them remember, that Carthage, the great archetype of England, once covered the seas with fleets, and astonished the world with the rapid augmentation of her opulence and greatness; that she too aimed at distant conquests and dominions, while Hannibal was desolating the fruitful plains of Italy, and thundering at the gates of Rome; but let them also remember, that when the tide of fortune changed, Hannibal was recalled for the defence of Africa, and a single battle decided the fate of Carthage.

As to those who yet flatter themselves that it is in the power of this nation, either to grant or to withhold the independence of America, I must intreat them to consider what it is which

constitutes the independence of any country. — Is it not the firm undeviating will of the individuals who compose it not to submit to foreign domination, accompanied with the actual exercise of sovereignty, and the power of defending themselves from all external violence? In all these respects, is not America as actually independent as any nation of Europe, as independent as Great-Britain herself, would she, for an instant, lay aside her habitual arrogance, and consider her own internal situation? For upon what shall we establish our superior claim? Is it upon a short continuance of inauspicious peace, during which the nation has seen almost every post of trust and power filled up by men whom she hated or suspected; the sacred rights of popular election invaded; the streams of justice itself sometimes tainted, sometimes restrained; and every petition of the people treated with undisguised contempt? Is it upon a seven years civil war, into which the most respectable, perhaps the major part of this nation has been reluctantly dragged, and forced to contribute to its continuance by expences almost ruinous to the very existence of private property, like malefactors that are condemned to carry the instruments of their own execution? Is it upon the patience with which this people has born the destructive burthens of the present war, the wild waste of public property,

and the refusal of that moderate redress which Asiatic tyrants would scarcely have refused to Asiatic slaves? — Or is it, lastly, upon that vote of an *uncorrupted* House of Commons, which establishes the existence of public abuses in these memorable words: “ that the influence of the Crown has been increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.”

Should any honest minds be offended at the boldness which I use, I must beg them to consider that I do not mention a single circumstance, which has not repeatedly been asserted, and reasoned from as fact, by most of the gentlemen who now compose our Administration; and I am not willing to lose that happy moment, which may, perhaps, never return, when I find my own sentiments in perfect unison with those of the established government. If farther apology than this should be deemed necessary, I must reply, that we have been too long intoxicated with the fumes of our ambition and importance, too little accustomed to consider our present situation. — Too long a series of revolving years has seen us the slaves of imposture and delusion, the prey of idle credulity, and the implicit victims of every interested fiction. — Every species of parliamentary and public information has been so studiously withheld, that I much doubt if a single fact has
ever

ever been offered to the people, since the commencement of the present war, upon which we can entirely depend. In the mean time, the good people of this country, that country whither the rest of Europe was accustomed to send their philosophers, as ancient Greece to Egypt, in order to study morals and legislation, seems contented with the conviction of its own established greatness, to have considered with indifference every circumstance upon which that greatness must depend. Did a new dancer arrive from the Opera de Paris, who straddled wider, or capered higher than his associates, you might behold the genuine and undissembled eagerness with which the British nobles and senators considered the event. His agility, his shape, his antic postures, his grimaces, nay, the very ribbands which he wore, and the colour of his breeches, were scrutinized with all the anxiety of interest and investigation, during successive months. But did an immense continent revolt? was a naval battle lost, although its loss might shake the very foundation of our naval and commercial greatness? was a British army captured, or an island lost? it was just whispered upon the Exchange, repeated at a city dinner, jested upon by a court Lord, and then consigned to eternal oblivion.

But
 • Egypt, under the glorious reigns of the Ptolomies, was,
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But it is now time for the English nation to rouse from that delirium in which it has dreamed of conquest and dominion, in the midst of luxuries and pleasures which not only incapacitate it to command others, but even to preserve its own liberty. If my countrymen wisely bound their ambition with being the first dancing and fiddling nation in Europe, it is necessary to resign those schemes of power and conquest, which would only serve to draw their attention from these objects: but if some remains of antient pride, and the memory of past glories, should rush upon their minds, and stimulate them to new exertions, they cannot too soon or too attentively consider their present situation, lest those exertions, like all the rest, should be ineffectual, and only exhaust the faster their few remaining resources. Nations, like individuals, can only hope to succeed, while they proportion their enterprizes to their force, and wisely aim at possibilities. That people will never be deserted by fortune, which is not wanting in itself, and which endeavours with fortitude and wisdom to atone for former rashness; but violent and injudicious efforts,

like modern Britain, distinguished by its love of dancers, fiddlers, and eunuchs. When the affairs of that country had come desperate, and Augustus was advancing with rapid marches to the capital, the sovereign and court were employed in pantomimes, feasts, parties of the chase, and jelling upon their own losses.

however they may flatter the public pride, will never alleviate the public distresses; they are less the symptoms of health than the agitations of convulsion, which do not portend recovery, but approaching dissolution.

I cannot therefore too strongly inculcate upon my countrymen, the necessity of mixing with that fortitude which is so requisite in their present circumstances, some portion of that good sense for which they were once deservedly famous.— This, I cannot help believing, will evince, if properly exerted, the necessity of chusing one of the alternatives which I have mentioned; either that of prosecuting the war against the Americans to subdue them by force, or of granting their independence, and general terms of peace to all the nations we have irritated. Let the inhabitants of this metropolis, that fertile soil, where every seed of prejudice and absurdity is generally found to germinate with the rankest vegetation, recal for an instant, their own sensations in respect to the rioters of 1780. The outrages of those unhappy men were partial, and affected but a small number of individuals; yet let them recollect the general consternation and horror which were produced in almost every mind, and which seemed, for some considerable time, to have extinguished even national humanity. The streets heaped with the dead and dying, during the military fury which raged for some days uncontrouled; and the yet
more

more awful spectacles of promiscuous and implacable justice, served only to gratify the stern resentment of the mildest people in Europe, and to fill them with silent satisfaction. The very eyes of the softer sex, accustomed to weep for every trivial, for every fictitious woe, seemed to refuse a tear for the numberless miseries that surrounded them; so vast, so many are the sacrifices which the jealousy of invaded property demands for the slightest offence. This recollection, I should think, might teach my countrymen to guess at some part of the sensations which must rankle in the bosoms of the Americans. They have seen their property laid waste, their towns and cities consumed, their country desolated with all the fury that marks the last excesses of war, inflamed by civil hatred; every insult has been offered to their women, every degree of scorn and inhumanity to those who were taken prisoners, and every species of barbarity to those who resisted: even the savage tribes, whose manners are sometimes quoted to express a degree of atrocious cruelty beyond the conception of polished nations, were not judged unworthy of the alliance of singing, fiddling, Frenchified Britain; or agents improper to be employed in her domestic quarrels. But it has pleased that Providence, to whom the solemn appeal of both countries has long been made, to repress the arrogance of this country, blast her ambitious designs, and bid her vengeance and her

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insults

insults recoil upon her own devoted head; and now, disgraced and baffled, with smothered rage and unavailing pride, we reluctantly prepare for peace. But are we yet to learn that the Americans are men; men that can feel, as deeply as ourselves, the sense of injury and injustice; men that possess reason and passions in common with ourselves, and haughty minds, stimulated at once by vengeance and elevated by success?—If so, what is there to justify the fond and foolish prejudice which leads us to imagine they will, at the first invitation, abandon in our favour all the alliances they have contracted, entail perpetual infamy upon their rising name, and stain with the imputation of levity and falsehood, all the trophies they have raised? Is it the old prejudice, that almost a fourth of the whole earth requires the assistance of a small damp island, placed at the distance of many thousand miles, in order to enable it to subsist? Are we yet to learn that America possesses every variety of product which this country could ever boast; all that the warmer suns of Spain and Italy can ripen, with thousand others denied to the industry of Europe? Or do we believe that the choice and excellence of our manufactures will make them again accept our empire? This reason, though better founded than the last, will be found equally vain; for a more urgent necessity presses us to sell than them to buy, and every nation in Europe is preparing to extract her

her own advantage from our mistakes ; every port is opening to their ships, and every state soliciting their commercial alliance. Or perhaps it may be the blessings of our envied and admired constitution that may soften their stubborn souls ; and they may pant for the splendour of a civil list ; for the œconomy with which our finances are managed ; for the blessings of bishops and hereditary nobles ; for the intricate magnificence of our Gothic tenures ; for a clergy to decimate their agriculture, without performing in person a single duty of their office ; for a navigation act to improve their commerce ; and for the mysteries of a virtual representation to secure their freedom.

Let us for once be candid, and acknowledge that we have nothing, in our present situation, to allure the Americans to a participation ; that men, who have laboured through seven bloody years to establish their right to freedom, will hardly throw away, without a motive, the harvest of their toils, and submit to wear the yoke which they had broken to pieces. Let us allow that Providence, wherever it has given a fertile soil and temperate climate, has intended the human species should exist and encrease, without asking the privilege from equals, who are separated from them by the whole habitable earth, or half the extent of ocean. Let us allow that men that possess reason, industry and experience, and that have emanci-

pated themselves from the chains and prejudices of Europe, may provide for their own internal policy and external defence, without the assistance of English lawyers or an English House of Commons.

Nor, could the shadow of a connection, the chimera of a political union, be admitted by the keen-sighted, jealous Americans, can I conceive at present any other effects which would arise from it, but new wars, new mischiefs, and new declarations of independence. Upon what terms, I ask, is it to exist? Is it to be a mere vague, unmeaning, undefinable acknowledgment of dependence, while their provincial governments retain all the attributes of perfect and unlimited sovereignty? Is such a paltry subterfuge worthy to be proposed by us, or granted by them? Would it not add ridicule to our disgrace, as if our pride was capable of being soothed with so paltry a concession; as if we chose to derive our titles from what we had lost, and like some of our own noble spendthrifts, to be only pointed out by the estates we had alienated and squandered?

But we must, I fear, pay an higher compliment to the great politicians amongst us, who are contending for such a scheme. They must certainly have a wider reach, and intend to secure something like a constitutional subordination in America, even though they give up the exploded principles of taxation, and permit the infringement

ment of the Act of Navigation. But are we so little acquainted with human nature, as not to see that this would answer no other purpose, than that of keeping alive a continual distrust in the Americans, a continual jealousy of intended encroachment, and would eternally prevent the ancient wounds from closing? From the present Administration I can, indeed, fear nothing, because there is scarcely a man amongst them, that is not personally pledged to the people for the integrity of his intentions, and for the redress of public grievances. But is their continuance eternal? Have we not seen premature political death cut off as promising administrations, even in the bloom of sportive infancy*. Alas! who does not know the thousand unforeseen contingencies that may deprive us of the fruits of their labours, and change the present mild, pacific, unoffending spirit of our councils, into gall and rancour? But how is this subordination to be secured? Is it to be guarantied by Congress, or is it to be maintained by those *red-coated* citizens, who enforce the execution of civil laws, under the denomination of a military force? In the one case, I fear, lest the dependence should be merely nominal, although it produce most of the inconveniences of a real one; in the other, I dread, lest

* This was written during the short period of the Rockingham Administration.

the Americans should object to resigning every thing into the hands of military guardians, without overawing them by a superior number of their own militia. In that case, where will be their efficacy? Or were they nearly balanced, who will insure the continuation of even a month's agreement between high-minded men accustomed to decide every thing by the sword, and inspired with all the animosities which the present contest has breathed into their souls? Should feuds arise, should blood be shed, will their respective nations be unconcerned spectators of the fray? And then the offices of state, are they to be filled up by Congress, by the people of every state, or by the British Minister? Will the Americans acquiesce in such nominations? Will they suspect no frauds, no influence, no interference of the Treasury, no attempts upon their *Roman* virtue? Or, should they suspect such practices, however innocent, will haughty souls like theirs tamely acquiesce in suffering British gold to win its way, where British steel has failed? Will they not return with tenfold fury to their beloved independence, and will not every circumstance I have mentioned be sufficient to dissolve the feeble connection, or kindle the ill-extinguished flames anew?

But I am reasoning about events which are so little likely to happen, that they scarcely deserve a moment's consideration; and the two principal divisions

divisions of politicians in this country, cannot, without the last inconsistency, admit their probability for an instant. Those who have always asserted, that the Americans have long desired independence, even prior to these unfortunate disputes, can hardly imagine that they will give up the darling object of their intrigues, the very first moment they have obtained it; and those who believe the assertions of the Americans themselves, and the evidence of events, that every step they have taken in this affair has been suggested and necessitated by the persecutions of this country, will not believe that they will, on a sudden, acquire so much confidence in us, or retain as little in themselves. It is now time for the English to lay aside their foolish contempt of men, who being descended from their own nation, boast an equal share of all the qualities which have ever distinguished it, and to believe that the Americans no more want ability in their councils, than valour in the field. Let us not then imagine them so grossly ignorant of their own situation and of ours, as to grant to negotiations what they have refused to arms. Let us not then imagine them either so devoid of reason or of honour, or so ignorant of their own essential interests, as to enter into any treaty with us, which would cover them with the imputation of perfidy, and deprive them of the friendship and assistance of the other nations of Europe. Were it even possible

possible that the great body of the people of America, for there is no virtual representation there, should overlook the necessary consequences of such a measure, let us have a better opinion of the abilities and of the ambition of their leaders, than to imagine that they would suffer them to accede to such proposals, without opening their eyes to all its possible effects. We did not find them so easy to be deceived, or wrought upon, when the conciliatory propositions of 1778 were sent over; and we must have a very peculiar view of human nature, if we imagine that success is likely to render the mind more tractable and humble. Have we ever experienced these effects ourselves?

Let me now be permitted to enquire what are the advantages likely to ensue from a generous avowal of the independence of America. The first advantage which I think will arise from it, is that of changing the entire nature of the contest, and placing Great Britain in a less odious point of view to all the neighbouring nations.

When we take a retrospective view of modern history, we shall find that almost every people of Europe has, at some period of their existence, been seized with the delirium of extending their power by conquest; and of these bold disturbers of human peace, that there is scarcely one that has not expiated its rash exertions, by ages of inactivity and weakness. Venice, Portugal, and
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Sweden, have just astonished the world, like short-lived meteors, by their transitory greatness : Spain and France have scattered terror and dismay, with the more continued blaze of comets ; but both the former and the latter have resigned their place to England, who, unterrified by past experience, rushed forward in the same mad career, and advanced rapidly to her decline. Europe, that had so often seen her the patroness of liberty, and the generous foe to tyrants, beheld her infatuation with mingled grief and pity, till roused by the strong impulse of interest, or irritated by injuries, the different nations that compose it have either engaged in the contest, or prepared themselves to repel the violence they dreaded, with equal violence. But this jealousy of England, like the causes that have occasioned it, is transitory, and easy to be removed. The natural envy that attends a powerful and conquering nation, a want of moderation in the exercise of that superiority, and the immense spoils which the emancipation of America from all commercial restraints promises to the different kingdoms of Europe, have been the causes that have indisposed them against their ancient friend and ally. It may have been their interest, it may have been their passion, to clip the wings of her inordinate ambition, and to increase their own naval importance, by lowering her's. But the hour of Britain's insolence is past, the measure of her disgrace is full, and it can neither be their interest

or their passion that she should be reduced beyond a certain point ; still less can it be their aim and object to support the maritime greatness of France and Spain, those ancient and inveterate enemies to the common liberties of Europe.

Let England, therefore, give up the only object which the rest of Europe demands ; an object she may yield with magnanimity, but cannot withhold ; and from that instant she will be enabled to make an honourable peace ; or, if compelled to carry on the war, the principles and fortune of it will be changed. France has hitherto had the address to cover her ambitious views with the specious semblance of moderation ; she has ceased to be the common invader of all her neighbours, and the disturber of the general peace ; she is become the patroness of universal liberty, the guardian of public rights, and the disinterested championess of the distressed *. England, on the contrary, from the unfortunate principles of the war in which she is engaged, and from the headlong spirit of revenge with which she has prosecuted it, has lost the advantage of the ground, and presented herself to the eyes of Europe too

* It is something singular that the same nation, which now holds Corsica by right of conquest, should feel herself so interested in the liberties of America. Henceforth no revolution will be pronounced impossible, since the same period has shewn England oppressing and France supporting the rights of nature and humanity.

much in the light of a proud, imperious conqueror. So long as she suffers the contest to be carried on upon its present principles, that disadvantage will remain; and her crafty rival may bereave her of all her most valuable possessions, with the appearance of desiring peace, and only acting upon the defensive. But let England once desist from those ambitious schemes of subjugating the Colonies, which have already cost her so much; and offering them the contested points, offer to her other enemies an equitable peace; and France, who is the principal of her enemies, will either be compelled to accept it, or to lose her present situation. Not all the artifices she can then use, not all her policy, will then prevent her from appearing the aggressor; and she will excite so much the more jealousy and suspicion, as her present dissimulation is deeper, and her ambition more carefully concealed.

If we now consider the confederacy which is formed against us, we shall find it composed of the most discordant and heterogeneous elements. All the States that constitute it, vary as much in their respective interests, as they do in language, manners, prejudices, and government. America, with a wish, of which perhaps she is scarcely sensible, to be reconciled to the parent-state, provided England will treat her like a child that is arrived at maturity, and acknowledge her independence, is obliged to treat a nation, of whose designs she is secretly

suspicious, with confidence and respect. France, on the contrary, whose darling object is to weaken the naval power of England, till it become inferior to her own, is supporting a rising empire, of which she either is, or shortly will be jealous. Holland, irritated by the injuries and provocations she has received, by the invasion of her commerce, the capture of her settlements, and the intrigues which she suspects this country to have carried on against her liberty, is waging a war of defence, of indignation, and of revenge. Spain, who had originally but little inducement to intermeddle, is probably bribed with the hopes of recovering Jamaica and Gibraltar; and without farther consideration, interest, or passion, is combating to aggrandize an ally, against whom she entertains a secret and hereditary hatred.—If the view, which I have here presented, of the interest and designs of the several nations with whom we are involved be just, it must appear probable, that the obstinacy of England in prosecuting a war to subjugate the colonies, and her impatience of every obstacle, have proved the strongest bonds of confederacy to her enemies. The æra, therefore, of her desisting from this destructive claim, whose fatal consequences she has sufficiently experienced, will be the commencement of discord and distrust, amongst allies, whom accidental not permanent interests have united. France herself, should she be guided by enlightened and extensive views of her own interest, may be contented with the honour and
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advantages she has gained, and wisely fear a reverse. She may perhaps perceive, that the project of destroying the public credit, and exhausting the resources of England, may, by a continuance of the war, recoil upon her own head ; and these considerations may make her as willing to accept, as we are to offer terms of peace. As to Holland, although the present impulse of passion and the desire of revenge may momentarily transport her from her natural peaceable bias, there is little doubt but she will be softened, when she perceives a real and important change in the councils of this country ; and that she will soon sicken of a war, where all the advantages will naturally center in her more powerful allies, and where victory, no less than defeat, may be prejudicial to her commercial interests. As to Spain, as no particular interests or passions have led her into the war, so we may, not unnaturally, imagine that she will be glad to free herself from the dangers and expences which attend it, by seizing the first opportunity of an honourable peace ; more especially if any unexpected misfortune should intervene, to abate the pride which unwonted successes may have raised.

As to the other nations of Europe, I cannot retain a doubt, that they would then find it as politic to reduce the insolence of France, as they now have that of England, and that allies would not be wanting in so just a cause, if necessary.

Nor

Nor would the advantage be less conspicuous, as to every purpose of internal defence. For every difference of opinion must then be silent, every murmur of discontent and opposition hushed, when the immediate question related only to the common safety of the country. What individual, that bore the name of Englishman, would not feel himself roused to every noble exertion? Who would refuse to contribute his property in any required portion, when he was certain it would be applied to national defence, not to the wild purposes of enslaving others, bribing the pretended representatives of his country, or to sustain the luxury of proud unfeeling oppressors?—Who would even withhold his blood, if that blood was necessary to defend his own just rights, and save his country's honor and independence from destruction? Thus, and thus only, would the resources of England be found really inexhaustible; when every scheme of selfish ambition was given up, when principles of justice were substituted to the low intrigues and frauds that have long disgraced her councils, and when the Ministers of the Sovereign were at length become the friends and patrons of the public liberties.

A very considerable portion of this nation has been long in avowed opposition to public measures; because they believed those measures, with whatever success attended, adverse to the interests and liberties of their country. These men have
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been reviled with every odious epithet which slander, falsehood, and malice could invent*: they have been represented as serpents that were fostered in their country's bosom, while they were watching every opportunity to sting her to the heart. I believe that most of these gentlemen have treated such insinuations with the same contempt that I have felt myself. But it is incumbent on all that have avowed these principles of opposition, to embrace the first opportunity of proving, that they are animated with as warm a zeal for their

* "Those who most deserve our resentment are unhappily at less distance. The Americans, when the Stamp Act was first proposed, undoubtedly disliked it, as every nation dislikes an impost; but they had no thought of resisting it, till they were encouraged and incited by European intelligence from men whom they thought their friends, but who were friends only to themselves.

"On the original contrivers of mischief let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance. With whatever design they have enflamed this pernicious contest, they are themselves equally detestable." Taxation no Tyranny, p. 86.

In assenting to the latter part of this quotation, I believe every Englishman will concur; but perhaps it may now admit a doubt, if any sacrifices are to be offered up to an insulted nation, from which party they should be chosen; whether from that which has uniformly opposed an unjust and ruinous civil war, even with the hazard of personal safety; or from that which by every art of fraud and misrepresentation, by refusing to listen to every species of information, by withholding all genuine intelligence, and taking advantage of the too irritable passions of a deluded people, has produced the present weight of national calamity. If those who dissuade violent measures are to be answerable for consequences which they most abhor, the imputation of cruelty and persecution should be transferred from the bloodiest of the Roman emperors to Christ, the Apostles, and the Martyrs.

country's

country's welfare, and dare as nobly in her just defence, as those whose vaunts and menaces have been heard the loudest. It is also incumbent upon them to evince, that their attachment to America has been the attachment of virtuous citizens, who think the real interest of their country can never be promoted by execrable and selfish schemes of enslaving others, not a guilty preference of America to England. Nor can I doubt, though little inclined to pledge myself for the conduct of others, that should the Americans once abandon the just grounds of self-defence, and, after having been offered the long contested independence, and terms of peace which they may accept consistently with their treaties, league with the enemies of Britain for her farther humiliation, that from that instant their warmest friends would become their most inveterate enemies.

Something remains to be said of the Americans themselves; and as far as human reason may pretend to foresee the future, these are the consequences which I should think might be expected to arise from an acknowledgment of their independence. Persecuted as they have been by the arms of Britain, struggling at once for liberty and existence, it is no wonder, if every former sentiment has been suspended, and if affection has yielded its place to bitterness and rancour. Still less can we be surprized, if they have found a friend in every enemy to Britain, and have gladly

gladly entered into every alliance that supported them against her vindictive claims. Those, who at the same time that they justified the Americans in the first periods of their resistance to Britain, have blamed them for their declaration of independence, and their treaties with France, seem to possess but little acquaintance with human nature; or even with the necessary consequences of their own principles. If such things exist as human rights, which ought to be the basis of every society, and which, when once invaded, leave mankind at large to consult their own preservation, by following the dictates of reason and experience; it must be granted, that the American independence was not only justifiable, but unavoidable. How could men that had been deliberately placed out of the protection of this country, and devoted to destruction, consider themselves as owing any thing to their destroyer? Or how could that destroyer be considered as the proper guardian of the very rights which she had invaded, after they had been snatched from her oppression by the bloody operations of the sword? Britain might, indeed, talk of benefits, consanguinity, and gratitude, at the very instant that she was spreading havock and devastation; and attempt to persuade the Americans that these were only symptoms of her maternal care, and her zeal for constitutional liberty. But not all the sophistry of her ablest advocates, the distinctions of her lawyers, or the pious hypocrisy

of her churchmen, can be expected to silence the feelings of our nature, or convert the excesses of irritated pride into the effusions of tenderness and affection. Those that believe tyranny to be the favourite attribute of Divinity, and that Providence had no other end in creating the innumerable millions which people the earth, than to soothe the pride, or employ the vacant moments of its lazy and besotted vicegerents, may be startled at every exertion of human liberty; but those, that in the human species behold an animal endowed, indeed, with nobler faculties, and destined ultimately to an higher end, but agitated and impelled by the same passions which govern every other kind, will laugh at the opinion, that there are individuals only born for the service of others, or nations that are not to exist without the permission of their equals. When they are gravely told, that the Americans must not make laws for their own government, because they are originally descended from the English, they will ask, if the courser that bounds along the mountains of Chili, must not graze the herbage, or taste the spring, without the formal permission of his Andalusian brethren? Or whether the patient ox, that slowly breaks the fallows of our western hills, may claim a right to dispose of the immense savannahs of America? They will ask, if there is any law of Heaven, or Nature, more certain, more universal, more obligatory,

gatory, than that of self-preservation ; and whether Great Britain, when she obliged the Americans to draw the sword for their own defence, did not herself wave every other claim, and dissolve every other compact ? — If, therefore, the Americans were right in the first moments of their resistance, it will follow, that they were right in every subsequent one ; since the same imminent necessity continually impended ; since gratitude and persecution, government and hostility, are incompatible terms ; and since universal experience has demonstrated, that no human passion is so little to be trusted as disappointed ambition. That necessity, therefore, which made them first take up arms, produced their independence, and their alliance with France ; and that independence must incline them to league with every nation that is inimical to Britain, so long as Britain retains the power and the inclination to annoy them. The basis, therefore, of this alliance is mutual dread and mutual jealousy of this country ; and the policy of those who think it is to be dissolved by a continuance of the war, unless we deem ourselves equal to the conquest of both nations, resembles the attempt of the North Wind, in the Fable, to make the Traveller lay aside his cloak ; the keener blew the blast, the closer he wrapt his mantle round him, to defend him from its severity.

But let Great Britain desist from her chimerical attempts to subdue a country, that is at this mo-

ment better prepared for internal defence than herself; let her either withdraw her garrisons from the American towns, or stipulate to withdraw them upon fair and honourable terms; let her, above all, give every evidence, that under the proposals of reconciliation she conceals no insidious project of renewing a war of conquest; and it is probable that she may unbind the chain, which all her forces would never be sufficient to break. It is evident, that from this moment the Americans will cease to consider the English people as their foe; that from this moment every former prejudice in their favour will be revived, and every ancient affection recur to their minds. Their prohibitory laws will be repealed; their ships, no longer fettered by the tyrannic influence of navigation acts, will voluntarily find their way to our ports, and their harbours in return will be open to our fleets. The industry and ingenuity of our manufacturers will again find ample employment, when so immense a market is opened to their exertions. In this sense, the colonies will still be ours; ours in every rational and enlightened view of interest, without infringing the rights of nature or violating the laws of humanity. Every increase of population or agriculture amongst them will equally contribute to our advantage, by the increased demand for our commodities: thus will they voluntarily alleviate our burthens; and bear without repining the enormous weight of the public impositions here. And indeed, if we consider the

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true interests of this country, we shall find that it is commerce alone which had raised us to our late envied pitch of greatness; and that it is by commerce only that we can hope to preserve some political importance, and the shattered fragments of our empire. We neither possess that vast extent of country, or population, which can fit us to aspire at dominion by conquest. Above all, our insular situation, while it secures us from the sudden irruption of our neighbours, renders them in turn more independent of us. For although the empire of the sea may in a certain degree command respect by land, yet I cannot recollect a single instance of any country's being conquered by a naval invasion, that possessed even moderate resources, or the common means of self-defence. The Carthaginians, who were destroyed by Scipio, in the third Punic War, constitute no exception; since they were first exhausted by their own imprudent efforts, and afterwards deserted by the other nations of Africa, to whose jealousy the greater part of the Roman success was owing. Still less can the conquest of the new world by Cortez, in the sixteenth century, be admitted in opposition to the rule; for there, the inequality of arms and discipline operated with an almost irresistible force: yet even that superiority would have been vain, had not the impolitic jealousy of the Tlascalans saved the common destroyer from impending ruin, and first established the Spanish tyranny in Mexico. But as Britain can never look
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for similar contingencies, so she will be precluded from the dangerous delusion of attempting distant conquests, the instant she properly considers the nature of her own insular situation. Happy indeed would it have been for her, had she perceived this great truth a little earlier. For had she cast even a superficial view upon some of the most important parts of her history, she would have seen enough to sicken her with the very idea of carrying on an offensive war, more especially at such a distance, as must inevitably render courage, policy, and even riches vain, if she had to do with enemies that were not wanting to themselves. What end did all the decisive victories, which she formerly gained over the French, produce, but new toils, new contests, fresh waste of blood and treasure, and at length her final expulsion from every province which she had ever held? What were the effects, in the beginning of the present century, of all the bloody wars about the Spanish succession? Did they not end, in spite of all her boasted advantages, in the accumulation of her own debts, and the establishment of the very competitor they were meant to exclude? Have not similar effects, at a later period, been the uniform consequences of every continental war she has waged? And in respect to the present American contest, did not every dispassionate person foretel the event*, or at

* I remember conversing, in the year 1775, with a friend, Mr. Keir, of Birmingham, who had served with honour and ability

least demonstrate, that whether baffled or victorious, she must suffer mighty losses, such as she might never recover, without the least rational hope of advantage? For granting for an instant, that the first victories of the British arms had been as decisive as they were splendid, I cannot help deliberately asserting, that unless we had given up all the controverted points at once, and endeavoured to reconcile the irritated minds of the Americans, by restoring to them all they had lost, the event might have been something later, but would have been precisely the same as at present. As to the first alternative, I leave good men to conjecture the nature of that constitutional liberty which was intended for the conquered Americans; but I cannot help making

ability in the late war, tho' since distinguished by his literary and philosophical pursuits, upon the probable consequences of the American contest. He then delivered an opinion, which the experience of seven years has only illustrated and confirmed. "If (said he) the Americans are not wanting to themselves, it will be impossible for this country ever to subdue them; for our force must either be drawn together into one or two spots, and then, however irresistible it may prove, the rest of the continent will remain in the possession of the Americans, or it must be divided into small bodies, to maintain posts and occupy an extent of conquered country; in which case it will be impossible to prevent an enemy, perfectly acquainted with the country, and infinitely more numerous than ourselves, from continually harassing, annoying, and surprising them." Many officers, I have been informed, have made similar representations during the administration of Lord North; but were always received with coldness, and heard with contempt by the guardians of the public safety.

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some reflections upon the second case, because the ideas of conquest, however suppressed by the little checks we have received in our career of victory, do not seem entirely extinguished in some minds. Let us therefore suppose that the same expence of blood and treasure, which at the end of seven years has placed this country in a worse situation, both as to conquest and defence, than at the beginning, had produced a temporary cessation of hostilities ; and that after a certain number of civil and military executions, confiscations of property, &c. &c. his Majesty's peace had been successively proclaimed in all the Thirteen Provinces of America ; may we not suppose, that the same excellent policy which inclined our Government to make war, in order to reduce the exuberant spirit of liberty in the colonies to the proper bounds of loyalty and discretion, would have judged it equally expedient to provide for futurity, by modelling their respective governments to that excellent system of constitutional liberty, which is at this day found in Canada ? And would not such alterations have probably left that leaven of discontent, which would have made it necessary to maintain a military force among the conquered, amounting to at least forty or fifty thousand men, to prevent future insurrections ? Must not that military force have been continually increased with the increasing population of America, which is reckoned to double in about twenty-five years,

to prevent its becoming inadequate to its intended object? And would it have been an easy task to govern eighty, an hundred and sixty thousand men, and the indefinite multiples of that number, by orders from the War-Office here? Would it have been agreeable to our gentlemen, who with so much true wisdom and sound policy voted the American war, in order to lower their own taxes, to see the land-tax doubled, tripled, &c. in order to pay their military deputies in America? Or, can any one suppose, that the desolations of such a war, as would have subdued all opposition on that continent, would have left the inhabitants any resources to pay such a peace-establishment? As there must have arrived a term, beyond which it was utterly impossible to increase the numbers of our army there, would it not have been at least necessary either to prevent the farther increase of population by an act of our omnipotent Parliament; by destroying a given proportion of all the children that should be born; by selling them as journeymen to the loyal manufacturers of Liverpool, Manchester, &c. or else to relinquish at some given period, the whole American continent, and leave it to that independence which we so much dread? And lastly, would there not have been some danger in the mean time, that all our ambitious neighbours in Europe would have continually cast an eye to America, as our most vulnerable part; and have requited every real or

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imaginary offence from us, by entering into leagues with the exasperated colonies, sending them effectual succours to excite new rebellions, and by lighting up new wars; till the utter ruin of this country had produced the final emancipation of all its dependencies *?

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* I cannot resist the temptation of making the following extracts from Cato's Letters, written by the celebrated Mr. Trenchard, which sufficiently prove that the sentiments here advanced have no claim to originality, and that dispassionate men have always entertained similar opinions upon this important subject.

" I would not suggest so distant a thought, as that any of
 " our colonies, when they grow stronger, should ever attempt
 " to wean themselves from us: however, I think too much
 " care cannot be taken to prevent it, and to preserve their
 " dependencies upon their mother-country. It is not to be
 " hoped, in the corrupt state of human nature, that any na-
 " tion will be subject to another any longer than it finds its
 " own account in it, and cannot help itself. Every man's first
 " thought will be for himself, and his own interest; and he
 " will not be long to seek for arguments to justify his being
 " so, when he knows how to attain what he proposes. Men
 " will think it hard to work, toil, and run hazards, for the
 " advantage of others, any longer than they find their own
 " interest in it, and especially for those who use them ill: all
 " nature points out that course. No creatures suck the teats
 " of their dams longer than they can draw milk from thence,
 " or till they can provide themselves with better food: nor
 " will any country continue their subjection to another, only
 " because their great grand-mothers were acquainted.

" This is the course of human affairs; and all wise states
 " will always have it before their eyes. They will consider
 " therefore how to preserve the advantages arising from colo-
 " nies, and to avoid the evils. And I conceive, that there
 " can be but two ways in nature to hinder them from throw-
 " ing off their dependence; one to keep it out of their power,
 " and the other out of their will. The first must be by force;
 " and the latter by using them well, and keeping them em-
 " ployed

It is not without particular design, that I have entered into this digression; for I have seen my

“ ployed in such productions, and making such manufactures,
 “ as will support themselves and families comfortably, and
 “ procure them wealth too, or at least not prejudice their
 “ mother-country.

“ Force can never be used effectually to answer the end,
 “ without destroying the colonies themselves. Liberty and
 “ encouragement are necessary to carry people thither, and
 “ to keep them together when they are there; and violence
 “ will hinder both. Any body of troops considerable enough
 “ to awe them, and keep them in subjection, under the di-
 “ rection too of a needy governor, often sent thither to make
 “ his fortune, and at such a distance from any application for
 “ redress, will soon put an end to all planting, and leave the
 “ country to the soldiers alone; and if it did not, would eat
 “ up all the profits of the colony. For this reason, arbitrary
 “ countries have not been equally successful in planting colo-
 “ nies with free ones; and what they have done in that kind,
 “ has either been by force, at a vast expence, or by depart-
 “ ing from the nature of their government, and giving such
 “ privileges to planters as were denied to their other subjects.
 “ And I dare say, that a few prudent laws, and a little prudent
 “ conduct, would soon give us far the greatest share of the
 “ riches of all America, perhaps drive many of other nations
 “ out of it, or into our colonies for shelter.

“ If violence, or methods tending to violence, be not used
 “ to prevent it, our Northern Colonies must constantly en-
 “ crease in people, wealth, and power. Men living in healthy
 “ climates, paying easy or no taxes, not molested with wars,
 “ must vastly encrease by natural generation; besides that,
 “ vast numbers every day flow thither from our own dominions,
 “ and from other parts of Europe, because they have there
 “ ready employment, and lands given to them for tilling;
 “ insomuch that I am told they have doubled their inhabi-
 “ tants since the Revolution, and in less than a century must
 “ become powerful states; and the more powerful they grow,
 “ still the more people will flock thither. And there are so
 “ many exigencies in all states, so many foreign wars and do-
 “ mestic disturbances, that these colonies can never want
 “ opportunities, if they watch for them, to do what they

countrymen so generally elated with the late trifling and accidental successes, and forming to themselves such mighty and chimerical expectations, which seem to embrace no less an object than the destruction of the whole naval forces of all their enemies, that I cannot help trembling for the event. Convinced as I am, that there is no alternative between giving up the independence of America, and seizing the first opportunity of making a general peace, or of engaging anew in all the horrors and disasters of a war of conquest, which must end in the utter ruin of this country, I cannot help attempting to rouse them from their temporary delirium, which is as little allied to real greatness as it is to sound reason and policy. For this reason, I have stated the consequences which appear to me inevitable, had even the British arms, in the commencement of the present

“ shall find their interest to do ; and therefore we ought to
 “ take all the precautions in our power, that it shall never
 “ be their interest to act against that of their native country.”

Cato's Letters, Vol. IV. p. 4, 5, 6.

These were the sentiments of a writer as early as the year 1722.—With what gratitude and admiration must this people consider ministers, who, enlightened by the experience of half a century more, and actuated by deeper motives of policy, have treated such reasonings as these with the contempt they deserve; have boldly undertaken to rectify mistakes in the charters of the colonies, and to govern them by a military force; and this, after they had attained that awful period of maturity, which would have induced more timid politicians rather to relax the reins of maternal authority, than to attempt the dangerous task of tightening them!

war,

war, been attended with the most ample and unequivocal success.—But if we are to consider the success of Admiral Barrington as the beginning of a new war, which some of our politicians have asserted, let the English people consider, while they are yet upon the shore, the immensity of that sea on which they are preparing to embark! What deluges of blood must flow, what millions of treasure be consumed, before this country could be brought back to a situation in which she had the smallest hopes of success! As to the united navies of our enemies, are they not confessedly to ours in the proportion of three to two? Have not the French, in every engagement, given such decisive proofs, both of seamanship and courage, as to leave us no pretence to victory, upon equal terms, and frequently scarcely the poor consolation of explaining away a defeat? Have not the Dutch, whom, in spite of British prejudices, I do not hesitate to name a brave and injured nation, given us such unequivocal proofs of cool and inflexible bravery, that we seem ready to shrink from the contest which we had so wantonly provoked? What else did all those public rejoicings mean, upon the bare idea of a separate peace with a people, whom, within scarcely the interval of a year, I have heard reviled with every odious epithet, in every part of this metropolis? I am too sensible, that truths like these are little calculated to gain me either favour or popularity; and

would

would some abler pen have undertaken the necessary and dangerous task of awakening the public to their own affairs, by telling bold unpalatable truths, I should with pleasure have continued in native unmolested obscurity.—But since no abler advocate has chosen to appear, and since some possible good may arise from even these weak endeavours, if they should turn the public attention to the sober discussion of these important points, while all the risk and danger are entirely my own, I shall proceed with the same spirit I have begun, to the end of my short career. But, if neither our former menaces to bereave the French and Spaniards of all their possessions in the West-Indies, nor our deeper laid design to crush the Dutch at a single stroke, have succeeded to our wish; if every progressive year has seen our losses increase, and our efforts diminish in the same proportion, how mighty, how complete must be the madness that only proposes to end the war with the humiliation of all our enemies!—Are we yet ignorant that war, even in its most successful state, is scarcely less the scourge of the victorious than of the vanquished party*? Are

* “It is wonderful with what coolness and indifference the greater part of mankind see war commenced. Those that hear of it at a distance, or read of it in books, but have never presented its evils to their minds, consider it as little more than a splendid game, a proclamation, an army, a battle and a triumph. Some indeed must perish in the most successful field, but they die upon the bed of honour, resign their lives amidst the joys of conquest, and
“ filled

we uninformed, that it is most destructive to a commercial country, that depends for its greatness upon a free exportation of its products and manufactures? Do we consider the general failure of every branch of internal industry, with the gradual aberration of the rich streams of external commerce, which formerly enriched us; those aberrations which it is yet uncertain, whether an

“ filled with England’s glory, smile in death. The life of a
 “ modern soldier is ill represented by heroick fiction. War
 “ has means of destruction more formidable than the cannon
 “ and the sword. Of the thousands and ten thousands that
 “ perished in our late contests with France and Spain, a very
 “ small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy; the rest languished in tents and ships amidst damps and putrefaction;
 “ pale, torpid, spiritless and helpless, gasping and groaning, unpitied among men made obdurate by long continuance of hopeless misery, and whelmed in pits, or
 “ heaved into the ocean, without notice and without remembrance. By incommodious encampments and unwholesome
 “ stations, where courage is useless, and enterprise impracticable, fleets are silently dispeopled, and armies sluggishly
 “ melted away. Thus is a people gradually exhausted, for
 “ the most part with little effect. The wars of civilized nations make very slow changes in the system of empire.
 “ The public perceives scarcely any alteration but an increase
 “ of debt; and the few individuals who are benefited, are
 “ not supposed to have the clearest right to their advantages.
 “ If he that shared the danger enjoyed the profit; if he that bled in the battle grew rich by the victory, he might
 “ shew his gains without envy. But at the conclusion of a
 “ ten years war, how are we recompensed for the death of
 “ multitudes, and the expence of millions, but by contemplating the sudden glories of paymasters and agents, contractors and commissaries, whose equipages shine like
 “ meteors, and whose palaces rise like exhalations.”

Falkland’s Islands, p. 42, 43, 44.

age of peace and security would completely bring
 back into their deserted former channels? Will
 it not be necessary, before we give a new scope to
 arrogance and enterprize, to reckon up the vast
 arrears of the past, and to enquire whether the
 probable successes of a ten years war, against such
 formidable opponents, will balance the certain
 expences of a single year's delay of peace? Are
 we not already burthened, beyond the possibility
 of farther endurance; burthened, till even the in-
 ventive industry of ministerial ingenuity is forced
 to pause in its oppressions; lest, by the increase
 of weight unskilfully applied, the overcharged
 foundations should give way, and the immense
 fabric of debts and public credit sink, to rise no
 more? And is it in this situation that the En-
 glish nation employs itself in forming visionary
 schemes of grandeur and command, which, were
 they practicable, might ask at least another seven
 years bloody war, another hundred millions of
 expence in the execution? In the mean time, the
 numerous armies of America surround our few
 remaining towns; perhaps, flushed with the con-
 fidence of victory, and pushed on by the desire of
 vengeance, lead the scanty remnants of our late
 victorious bands into captivity; perhaps, in the
 new ardour of successful enterprize, roll back
 the tide of war upon our late secure possessions,
 and assist our enemies to seize all that fortune has
 hitherto permitted us to retain. At least, even
 should

should these ideas be premature, the fatal progress of our evil destiny is continually accelerated, while we waste the precious moments in empty dreams of chimerical exertions; the wounds which we have inflicted upon the Americans, are festering with redoubled anguish; all Europe is preparing to acknowledge their independence, and solicit their alliance; the riches of their commerce, the only resource, I fear, which, even with an immediate peace, would enable us to bear an annual expence of fifteen millions*, are doled out to every competitor; and when some new misfortune shall rouse us from our trance, it may find us reduced so low, as to wish for a return of the present crisis, even at the expence of half our remaining territories.

Let us remember, that it is the characteristic of light and frivolous minds alone to be elated beyond measure with every transient ray of better fortune; to be easily incited to form projects which exceed the compass of their abilities; and to be always ready to throw the blame of past miscarriages upon every thing rather than their own rash and chimerical projects. With such men, the change of a General, or of a Minister,

* On a supposition that a peace is concluded in 1782, the annual charge on the public on the 5th of January 1783, exclusive of collection and management, will be of neat money, 15,020,000*l*.

State of the Public Debts, &c. by Lord Stair, p. 7. printed for J. Stockdale.

will at any time insure success, and encourage the most extravagant expectations. They cannot believe that heaven, or fortune, will be so unjust to their extraordinary merits, as to submit their destiny to the influence of the common causes which controul human affairs; or refuse to work a miracle, whenever a miracle is necessary to extricate them from the effects of their imprudence. Are they citizens, like the Romans, of a state which has risen to importance by severer discipline and stricter manners? They imagine that all the Gods have fixed their residence in the eternal capitol, and will continue to defend the chosen spot, although every virtue which cemented its foundations is withdrawn. But if their country, by a rare coincidence of circumstances, an insular situation, a temperate climate, a system of laws which encourage industry and secure private property, has arrived at commercial and maritime greatness, they mistake these casual blessings for the inherent properties of their soil and climate. They imagine, that they may with impunity engage in every wild and pernicious project, and that their resources will increase in the same proportion that they exhaust and abuse them. Not even the rapid decline of commerce, their own increasing poverty, the miscarriage of their enterprizes, the loss of their fairest possessions, their acknowledged incapacity to meet their enemies on the ocean, or their own shores in consequence undefended, and
 exposed

exposed to every invader, can make them abate their arrogance, or lower their pretensions: Nor should I doubt that such a people might gravely claim the empire of the sea, when it had neither commerce, fleet, or seamen left, provided some happy genius should institute a naval procession, or, after the example of the Venetians, proclaim a marriage to be solemnized with the Atlantic.

But it is to be hoped, that the national good-sense, when properly applied to the investigation of the subject, will check the desire of military glory, and at length settle in that only measure which can produce any degree of public happiness, a general and substantial peace. Peace is the first and most necessary reform which is required. It is this alone that can restore the almost ruined state of our finances, if that restoration be still possible. A strict and uniform œconomy, applied with unremitting attention, during half a century of peace, might perhaps reduce the public debts within a moderate compass: but what can be expected from our ministers during war, even though they possessed a degree of prudence and disinterestedness which have never yet appeared in man? It is well known that all the schemes of our greatest political œconomists would never have made the public savings amount to half a million; while about three-and-twenty millions may be calculated to compose the moderate purchase of a single year's continuance of the

war. Let my countrymen then seriously reflect upon the accumulation of public debts, such as I believe was never experienced in any other country ; upon the intolerable burthens with which every article of convenience, or necessity, is already loaded ; and upon forty or fifty additional millions of loan and outstanding debts, which must, in all probability, be directly funded, and new taxes imposed to supply the interest, at least if the declining commerce of the country can support them, before new schemes of enterprize and conquest are adopted *. I should then wish to be resolved by some of our ablest calculators, whether the most uninterrupted successes would be likely in any degree to pay the expences they had cost ; and whether the fee simple of all the possessions we have lost, excepting the monopoly of the American commerce, which I cannot help supposing out of the question, would indemnify us for a two years continuance of the war. But we have no reason to expect such uninterrupted success from any thing we have yet experienced ; and nothing but the most childish presumption can found a sanguine expectation of better fortune, upon the mere remembrance of past disasters. On

* The balance of unfunded debt, after deducting from the 50,000,000 charged against the Public in account No. I. the 13,500,000, funded in 1782, &c. is £.37,766,338

Total capital debt on the 5th of January, 1783, 250,040,388

State of the Public Debts, p. 12.

the

the contrary, though we have been repeatedly drawn in, like losing gamesters, to hazard more upon a fresh stake, we have constantly experienced the same catastrophe ; nor has there been a single period of six months, which has not degraded us to a worse situation than we were in before, and augmented our difficulties, both in respect to making peace and carrying on the war.—But as to all the past, however pernicious, however absurd the contest may have proved, however deservedly the authors of it may be reprobated as the deliberate enemies of their country, that contest was less absurd in the beginning, and less pernicious in the continuance, than it would prove at present. It had then a precise and determinate object, however fatal both to humanity and public liberty, the exertion of the legislative authority of Great-Britain over the colonies, or, in more explicit terms, the establishment of unlimited authority, and the reducing them to a state of unconditional servitude *. But this object, however execrable, was adapted to please the vanity of a considerable party in the nation, and few seemed able to discern the immediate loss, the ultimate shame and ruin which might ensue. Although it required no great penetration to foresee that the attempts of this country to extend her authority by force over the colonies, might at some future period produce

* See the Debates and political publications of that period.
their

their final emancipation, yet such was the apparent disproportion of the contest, that even the clearest understandings might doubt concerning the immediate event. But with the present experience of our own weakness, and the force with which we are to engage, nothing short of madness can hope for success in a new attack upon the independence of America. Indeed, the absurdity would not be more palpable, were we to revive our ancient pretensions upon France, and send over a mighty armament to annex the territories of his Most Christian Majesty to the crown of England. Were we then to continue an offensive war, it is plain that it must now be a war entirely without an object, since all hopes of subduing the colonies are at an end ; and it must be a struggle of mere disappointed pride and resentment : passions, which cannot long influence the councils of nations without the greatest danger, even in their meridian of power and fortune *. But

* Upon what other principle many of those gentlemen act, who, while they admit the truth of every fact and argument advanced in this Pamphlet, seem desirous of prosecuting the war against France, I own myself at a loss to determine. Resentment and revenge are proper topics for the inflammable passions of the multitude, when they are to be incensed beyond the bounds of reason or prudence ; but the real friend to his country looks with contempt upon every consideration, but the solid and essential interests of the many. Whoever is moderately versed in history, must know that the annals of every nation furnish scarcely any other spectacle than that of assassinations, massacres, and atrocious crimes, perpetrated for the meanest and most contemptible purposes.

as to ourselves, we have too long already been subject to the influence of these blind guides, and

purposes. Will mankind, amidst all the boasted improvements of their reason, never understand those truths which are most obvious to common sense, as well as most important to common happiness?---Let those patriots who bear so inveterate an antipathy to France, shew their public spirit, by opposing themselves to the headlong torrent of French sopheries and vices, which now deluges the nation; instead of laying down principles, which, were they to be universally adopted, must nearly cause the extinction of the human race; since, were no nation to accept of peace till it had obtained complete satisfaction for every imaginary wrong, there would exist an eternal necessity of war.---What satisfaction have we yet given to the Spaniards for supporting the Belgic Provinces in their revolt from Philip II. or in more modern times that of the Catalonians, when we deliberately undertook to dismember an independent kingdom, and share its spoils with our allies? Even the perfidious French have repeatedly seen us intermeddling in their domestic affairs, and fomenting the rebellions of the Hugonots. It is true, that we basely deserted both the Catalonians in the war of the Succession, and the Hugonots at the siege of Rochelle; but this conduct, I am afraid, will reflect but little lustre upon our national character. I would recommend to some of our principal Orators, the study of these particular periods of our History, together with that of our political conduct to Scotland and Ireland, while they constituted independent states. The Roman historians are full of invectives against Punic faith, which have been implicitly adopted by most modern compilers; but some instances of Roman virtue have dropt from their pens, which equal or exceed any thing they relate of the Carthaginians. But it is easier to declaim against the perfidy of the French, even while we are imitating them in the most contemptible parts of their character, than to do a noble justice to their virtues and their policy, yet retain the natural simplicity of the English character, and defend the liberty and independence of our country;

wasted

wasted too much in rash and visionary pursuits. No farther projects, no farther experiments can be tried with safety, unless we choose to destroy our remnant of wealth and power, as idly as we have dissipated all the rest. That remnant, if wisely managed, is at least sufficient for every purpose of national happiness, though not calculated to satisfy every demand of national vanity. But whatever may be our wishes or expectations, whether we are disposed to content ourselves with the solid enjoyments of safety and tranquility, or still aspire at dangerous pre-eminence, peace is alike necessary to the acquisition of either object. Peace alone can deliver us from the enormous burthens with which industry is loaded*, or at least prevent the necessity of new oppressions; peace alone can revive our drooping commerce and agriculture, and enable us, by wise and salutary laws, and internal efforts at improvement, to increase our population and manufactures. Peace would enable us to turn our attention at leisure, to the immense territories we possess in India; a territory so vast, so fertile, so well peopled, that it might compensate many of our losses, could we be convinced of the necessity of regulating it by wholesome laws, adapted to the genius of the inhabitants, instead of making it the theatre where European plunderers contend for

* See the concluding observations.

pillage *. Peace would make us more respected in all the dependencies which we yet retain, and

* “ Conquests, cession, inheritance, can bring only alliances with so many independent states under one Sovereign, as long as all controul is tyranny, that is not founded upon the actual consent of the people governed. Some few possessions we still have left. The dominions of our trading company to the East-Indies, from which we have drawn so many resources, and which our acts of parliament have interfered in with so little scruple, have yet enforced no such claims or pretensions; when they do, I trust, we shall find some new distinctions which may retain them under our subjection.” A Letter to John Sinclair, Esq; on Parliamentary Representation, p. 32. To give some idea of what that subjection is, I beg leave to insert the following extracts from an account of the late dreadful famine in India, &c. from the Annual Register of 1771, p. 205.

“ As soon as the dryness of the season foretold the approaching dearth of rice, our gentlemen in the company’s service were as early as possible in buying up all they could lay hold of. When the effects of the scarcity became more and more sensible, the natives complained to the Nabob at Muxadavad, that the English had engrossed all the rice, particularly in the Bahar and Purnea Provinces. This complaint was laid before the president and council by the Nabob’s minister who resides in Calcutta; but the interest of the gentlemen concerned was too powerful at the board; so that the complaint was only laughed at and thrown out.” It is probable these gentlemen were thoroughly convinced of the futility of the principle, that the consent of the people governed is necessary to constitute a just government, and therefore very consistently disregarded their complaints.

“ By the time the famine had been about a fortnight over the land, we were greatly affected at Calcutta; many thousands falling daily in the streets and fields, whose bodies, mangled by dogs, jackalls, and vultures, in that hot season, when at best the air is very infectious, made us dread the consequences of a plague. We had 100 people employed upon the Cutcherry list, on the Company’s account, with

probably eradicate the seeds of future civil wars, if we do not think it below our dignity to be

“doolys, sledges, and bearers, to carry the dead, and throw
“them into the river Ganges. I have counted from my
“bed-chamber window in the morning when I got up, forty
“dead bodies lying within twenty yards of the wall, besides
“many hundreds lying in the agonies of death for want,
“bending double, with their stomachs quite close contracted
“to their back-bones. I have sent my servant to desire those
“who had strength to remove farther off; whilst the poor
“creatures, looking up with arms extended, have cried out,
“Baba! baba! my father! my father! This affliction comes
“from the hands of your countrymen, and I am come here to
“die, if it please God, in your presence. I cannot move, do
“what you will with me.”

“At this time we could not touch fish, the river was so full
“of carcases; and of those who did eat it, many died sudden-
“ly. Pork, ducks, and geese, also lived mostly on carnage;
“so that our only meat was mutton when we could get it,
“which was very dear, and from the dryness of the season
“so poor that a quarter would not weigh one pound and a half.
“Of this I used to make a little broth, and after I had dined,
“perhaps there were 100 poor at the door waiting for the
“remains, which I have often sent among them cut up into
“little pieces; so that as many as could might partake of
“it; and after one had sucked the bones quite dry, and thrown
“them away, I have seen another take them up, sand and all
“upon them and do the same, and so by a third, and so
“on.”

See also upon the subject of Indian Legislation, the Examination of a Bramin before the Secret Committee of the House of Commons.

I cannot help, although with the greatest reverence, enquiring from our nobility and gentry who are so strenuous for punishing the perfidious French, till they have amply atoned for all their crimes; particularly from the Right Hon. Lord North, who has expatiated upon that idea with so much energy and eloquence; whether these facts are true? and, if true, what atonement either the British nation, or the British government, has offered to the manes of these victims, or to their surviving friends and relations?

taught

taught wisdom by our past experience, or unworthy our greatness to redress the just complaints we have occasioned by our former oppressions.

I shall now proceed to state those articles of the treaty of alliance between France and America, signed at Paris, February 6, 1778, which relate to the present subject, and prove the improbability of the colonies listening to any separate terms of peace, before the acknowledgment of their independence. The second article of that treaty expressly states, that "The essential and direct end
" of the present defensive alliance is, to maintain
" effectually the liberty, sovereignty and independence, absolute and unlimited, of the said
" United States, as well in matters of government
" as of commerce." The 8th article is, "Neither
" of the two parties shall conclude either truce or
" peace with Great Britain without the formal
" consent of the other first obtained; and they
" mutually engage not to lay down their arms,
" until the independence of the United States
" shall have been formally or tacitly assured by
" the treaty or treaties that shall terminate the
" war." This I should think is sufficient to prove how visionary and unfounded were the opinions which lately prevailed with many of my countrymen, that the Americans would obey the first invitation of this country to desert the French, and even league with us against them. Nothing but the same ignorance and inattention which have

guided every other part of our conduct, could possibly have produced such a judgment.

But a more specious and important consequence may be deduced from the articles I have quoted: that even should the English allow the independence of the Colonies in the most unequivocal manner, they are so involved with France, that they would not have it in their power to suspend hostilities without the permission of their allies. This interpretation is certainly not unauthorized, and is a sufficient comment upon the wisdom of those, who, in spite of the most authentic information, suffered the Americans to enter into such close connections with our enemies, at a time when it is probable a little moderation and vigilance on our part would have prevented them. But when we consider the sense of the second article, which explains and limits the nature of the alliance, we shall find that it expressly declares it to be defensive for the purpose of maintaining the sovereignty and independence of the United States. Again, the 8th article confirms this interpretation, by limiting the duration of the war to the acknowledgment of the independence of America. The obvious and literal sense of this treaty therefore is to ratify a defensive union between France and America, for the purpose of establishing the independence of the latter; and this end once obtained, leaves both the contracting parties at liberty. Nor can much doubt be entertained that the
Americans

Americans themselves will consider it in this light, and not think it necessary to carry on a war for the interest of their allies, against a nation with whom they have so many natural connections; and in whose favour we may rationally suppose so many ancient prejudices will arise, the instant all ideas of farther persecution are removed. It is the interest of the contracting parties, which is alone the guardian and interpreter of treaties between independent states; and this interest will evidently run as much in favour of England, when England discovers unequivocal inclinations for peace, as it did before against her. It was the interest of France to separate so large a portion of territory from Great-Britain, whom she justly considers as her most formidable enemy; it was equally her interest to throw down all barriers to the American commerce, which opened such unbounded views to the ingenuity of her manufacturers, and such ample resources to the embarrassments of her finances. Nor was it less the interest of the Americans to accept the overtures and alliance of every power which was hostile to this country, and offered to support their independence against its attacks. An alliance founded upon these principles, will necessarily remain firm and indissoluble, so long as the common interests of the contracting parties coalesce: but let either of them completely acquire the objects of its wishes, and ample scope is given to all the motives

tives of envy, jealousy, and distrust, to exert their power, and gradually corrode the bands of union.

Thus, it appears evident, in whatever light we consider the subject, that acknowledging the independence of America, is a necessary preliminary of peace: for it will either so completely satisfy the interest and ambition of all our enemies, that no material opposition will be made to its ratification; or should it fail to have that effect, will render the Americans so luke-warm and indifferent to the common cause, that we may naturally promise ourselves happier fortune against our remaining enemies.

Some gentlemen indeed seem to imagine, that it is not necessary to make such sacrifices, and that a reconciliation may be effected with America, on terms similar to what we have granted the Irish. But till they shall take the trouble of explaining the reasons of this opinion, I cannot help thinking that it is more calculated to flatter the remains of national pride, than founded upon any real knowledge of the subject.

It is no secret that a commission has been sent over from the American Congress to five commissioners in Europe to treat of peace, whenever Great-Britain shall be inclined to accede to those terms which are essential to its conclusion. It is also certain that several of the American agents, amongst whom Dr. Franklin may

may be numbered, have, both in their conversation and letters, expressed the most sincere desire of terminating the present waste of human blood, by a speedy reconciliation with this country; nor do I doubt that there is still sufficient affection remaining in the minds of many of the Americans, to make them desire every degree of prosperity to this country, which is consistent with the freedom, interest, and honour of their own. It is also equally certain, that not one of these commissioners, amongst whom are included Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Laurens, have ever given the present ministry the least hope that any part of America would relinquish its independence, for any terms or advantages proposed by Great-Britain; on the contrary, I have every reason to believe, that this has been the uniform language of all the American agents who have been consulted upon this subject: "Great-Britain by her
 "pride, her insolence, her unjust attempts to re-
 "duce the colonies to servitude, has compelled
 "them to resist by arms the intended invasion of
 "their rights. In the prosecution of this justifi-
 "able resistance they have declared themselves
 "independent; because, neither duty, compact,
 "nor allegiance, can subsist between the oppres-
 "sor and the oppressed; between the nation that
 "aims a mortal stroke at the existence of ano-
 "ther, and the people that takes up defensive
 "arms to vindicate itself from slavery and de-
 "struction.

"struction. But Providence has uniformly blast-
 "ed the ambitious designs of England, and fa-
 "voured the struggles of the Thirteen States, that
 "through such difficulties, through so many va-
 "rious fortunes, through such a storm of blood
 "and death, have persevered in the generous
 "design of maintaining the rights of nature and
 "the common cause of the human species. If
 "Great-Britain, unenlightened by all the past, un-
 "taught by her own calamities, still persists in
 "her former arrogance, and dreams of bending
 "the hitherto unconquerable minds of the Ame-
 "ricans, let her collect all her remaining forces,
 "and gather auxiliary troops of mercenaries
 "from all the tyrants that deal in human blood,
 "to make a last decisive trial of her fortune. She
 "has already abridged all other rights, and se-
 "vered every other tie, by appealing to the sword ;
 "and the sword is now the only charter of domi-
 "nion, by which she must hope to rule over
 "American subjects. Does she imagine that the
 "ghastly wounds of a seven years civil war are to
 "be closed in an instant by the charm of a falla-
 "cious lenity ? Or that the Americans can so
 "soon forget the injuries they have received,
 "their property wasted, their towns destroyed,
 "their country desolated, and every degree of
 "hostile insult and cruelty offered to their fami-
 "lies and themselves ? Are these the potent ar-
 "guments which are to induce them to resign the
 "price

“ price of all their victories, and trust themselves
 “ again to the compassion of a British govern-
 “ ment, at the expence of all that is manly, just,
 “ or noble, either in nations or individuals? Is it
 “ for these benefits, so feelingly enforced, that
 “ they are to desert allies that have supported
 “ them in the hour of danger, cherished the rising
 “ hopes of their infant states, and dared the venge-
 “ ance and the shock of the proudest, if not
 “ the most powerful nation in the universe? Or
 “ does the same delusion which made the English
 “ promise themselves so easy a conquest in the
 “ beginning, make them now imagine that the
 “ Americans are to be subdued by policy, after
 “ having proved themselves unconquerable by
 “ arms? Why else do they think of proposing
 “ terms which they must know would be rejected
 “ with scorn by every people that is not delivered
 “ up to infatuation? Shall the Americans brand
 “ themselves with every epithet of perfidy and
 “ falsehood, violate the unblemished honour of
 “ their new republicks, and deprive themselves of
 “ the future favour and assistance of all Europe,
 “ that must be witnesses of their shameful ingrati-
 “ tude, only that they may deliver themselves up
 “ to the very people that has been so long armed
 “ for their destruction.—They are not so igno-
 “ rant of the feelings of established governments
 “ towards those that are denominated rebels, or
 “ what they must themselves expect even from the

" moment of their accepting so sinister a league.
 " As to the pretended concessions which are some-
 " times made to rebellious subjects, they are at
 " best but authorized frauds, to disarm the in-
 " tended victims of future cruelty and revenge.
 " Is there in all the wide extent of history, that
 " baneful catalogue of human crimes and mis-
 " eries, a single instance of these involuntary con-
 " cessions which has not been revoked, without
 " regard to faith or humanity, the very moment
 " when it might be attempted with impunity ?
 " And what is there in the nature of the British
 " government, that should produce an exception
 " in its favour ? We are not ignorant of the mu-
 " tability and inconsistency of its councils ; those
 " councils which sometimes menace the security
 " and independence of all the surrounding na-
 " tions, sometimes solicit peace with the holy fer-
 " vour of primitive Christianity. If the English
 " themselves repose an implicit faith in their new
 " administration, it is not so with the Americans,
 " it is not so with the rest of mankind. We know
 " that the same breath which has blown up the
 " bubble, that now dances upon the atmosphere
 " of national conceit, may dissipate its unsubstan-
 " tial fabric, and breathe again those pestilential
 " vapours which lately threatened the destruction
 " of half mankind. As to the English themselves,
 " if they have voluntarily joined in this proscrip-
 " tion of the Americans, what faith, what confi-
 " dence

" dence is to be given to a barbarous unfeeling
 " nation, that only suspends its cruelties from an
 " inability to pursue them? — If, on the contrary,
 " as some pretend, they have been reluctantly
 " compelled to sanctify outrages which they dis-
 " approve, on what pretence do they attempt to
 " modify the rights of others, who are incapable
 " of defending their own? Let them therefore
 " understand, that whether their characteristic be
 " cruelty or weakness, we will neither confide in
 " the one, nor share in the mischievous conse-
 " quences of the other. We will remain fixed to
 " that spot, where fortune and Providence have
 " established the foundations of our rising empire,
 " by the agency of our own fortitude and virtue.
 " If England thinks that she can push us from
 " the solid basis on which we now stand firm, let
 " her approach with all her remaining forces, and
 " make the dangerous experiment. If, on the
 " contrary, she has had sufficient experience of her
 " own weakness, and wishes to give the world
 " and herself some interval of repose, let her,
 " as a preliminary, desist from all the schemes of
 " wild and fruitless ambition. Let her equally
 " lay aside the projects of fraud and violence;
 " nor attempt, by the contemptible arts of crook-
 " ed policy, to deceive those whom she is unable
 " to conquer. Let her meet the Americans with
 " sincerity and magnanimity; let her make all the

" atonement which is within her power to those
 " she has injured, by desisting from new attempts
 " to injure. As to our independence, in the amplest
 " sense that can be given to the term, we do not
 " ask it of England or her ministers, because it is
 " not theirs to give ; we already hold it from
 " Heaven and the points of our swords ; and
 " upon these alone shall we depend for its preservation. Yet if she fairly and honourably treat
 " with us upon these terms, we shall acknowledge
 " it as a proof of her sincerity, and accept it as a
 " pledge of offered peace. By these means, the
 " memory of past injuries may be gradually obliterated, and she may yet find in a participation
 " of our commerce, the surest prop of her declining opulence, and in our returning affection
 " and future alliance, no contemptible support
 " of her remaining empire. But let her at length
 " understand the real limits of her power, and
 " desist from the attempt to unite and reconcile
 " contradictions. The two alternatives of peace
 " and war are indeed before her, and she may
 " take her choice ; a firm and profitable peace,
 " accompanied with the independence of the colonies, or a war of hatred, revenge, and fury,
 " to reduce the Americans to servitude, or perish
 " in the attempt. More than this, neither fortune
 " nor Heaven allows ; nor her own ungovernable
 " madness, which has compelled the Americans
 " to

“to seize that independence which she now in
 “vain endeavours to with-hold, and compleated
 “the dismemberment of the empire.”

This, or nearly this, I have reason to believe, has been the language of the American agents, whenever they have been consulted : should I be mistaken, or endeavour to mislead, it will be no difficult matter to convict me of ignorance or falsehood. In the mean time, I cannot help supposing this representation to be a just one, and drawing some conclusions from it, which merit all the attention of the public.

It must appear evident, that no conclusion whatever can be admitted from the situation of the Irish to that of the Americans, excepting that a weak and oppressive government will produce similar effects in every part of its dominions. The Irish have obtained every thing they demanded : they asked for a free trade ; that free trade has been granted them : they disclaimed the authority of the British parliament ; that point too has been given up ; and they now declare themselves, as they have every reason to be, contented with the concessions of the government. They have never voted themselves independent, never entered into foreign alliances, never seen their country ravaged, or themselves proscribed, under the pretence of restoring constitutional liberty and happiness. There can be little doubt that the half of these concessions offered to the Americans,
 when

when they petitioned in the year 1775, would have preserved their union with this country inviolate, and prevented all the mischiefs which have since ensued. But that period is irretrievably past, and never can return. The colonies are now in actual possession of independence ; they have constituted internal governments, which may perhaps leave them little to regret in their loss of the British constitution ; they have formed alliances with other nations, upon the solemn compact of never again submitting to a dependence, either upon this country or crown ; they have repeatedly foiled the attempts of Great-Britain to reduce them to her dependence, and refused to treat upon any other footing than that of independent nations. What is there in all this, similar to the present, or past state of Ireland ; and what can be meant by the proposal of offering to the Americans the same terms we have granted to the Irish, unless a pretext for involving this country in all the miseries of a new war, to support propositions which we are sure will be rejected with contempt ?—Will these terms be offered to the Congress ?—But the Congress have no more power or right to accept them, than the British parliament would have to abdicate the independence of this country, and make it an appendage to France or Spain.—Nay less.—For a British parliament we all know is omnipotent ; an attribute which I believe has never yet been claimed by Congress, who are only the
deputies

deputies of the several states, to transact whatever business relates to the common interests of the confederacy. Besides, we have some reason to guess at their sentiments upon this subject, by their treatment of the British Commissioners in the year 1778.---Shall we then offer these gracious terms to each of the several states that compose the American confederacy? But I have yet heard of no overtures from any of the provincial governments, which should make us hope that they would be accepted; and we know it to be a fundamental article of the American union, that any state, which shall presume to treat of a separate peace, shall be accounted a deserter of the common cause, and a public enemy. No way therefore would remain, as we can neither expect the Congress, or any of the provincial governments, to treat with us upon these terms, but to have the gracious proposals of a repentant government printed and dispersed over the country, for the benefit of individuals. And as the Americans have already had some experience of our methods of protecting them, I leave every one to conjecture the probable success of such a measure; more especially if we add to it the late vote of the House of Commons against carrying on an offensive war in America. In the meantime I should fear, that these inconveniencies might result from such a step. The Congress
would

would not fail to pass the most indignant votes upon the occasion; they, and all the friends of the established governments, would paint this conduct of the English nation in the blackest colours of perfidy and deceit. They would represent us as a nation devoid of honesty and sincerity; so determinately inimical to the liberties of America, that we never, even when we assumed the most pacific appearances, could lay aside the idea of enslaving the colonies; that as our hostilities were replete with every species of cruelty, so were our negotiations with treachery and falsehood. “ What are these pretended
 “ offers (would they add) but a repetition of the
 “ same insidious arts, which they have so often
 “ ineffectually tried already? They know your
 “ prudence and your valour, when united; they
 “ know that you are neither to be subdued by
 “ force, nor circumvented by negotiation, and
 “ therefore they again have recourse to their
 “ wonted arts, and attempt to dissolve that union
 “ which renders you so formidable. It is im-
 “ possible for that haughty nation to consider you
 “ in any other light than that of slaves, eman-
 “ cipated for a moment, but destined sooner or
 “ later to return to her domination. Even when
 “ all the rest of Europe shall have admitted your
 “ independence, and solicited your alliance, you
 “ will be honoured with no other title than that
 “ of rebels by Great-Britain. The hatred that
 “ she

“ she nourishes against you, for your emancipa-
 “ tion, is as unchangeable and eternal as her
 “ purpose of reducing you again to her do-
 “ minion, and making you pay the accumulated
 “ punishment of your too successful resistance.
 “ This is the spirit which alike animates her wars,
 “ and dictates her proposals of peace. In the
 “ one, she has ever been a cruel and vindictive
 “ enemy; in the other, she is a false, insidious
 “ friend. Even now, amidst all her professions
 “ of returning amity, she cannot hide the venom
 “ which is rankling in her heart, or conceal the
 “ intolerable arrogance which has so long guided
 “ all her councils.—Does she offer to treat about
 “ a peace so necessary to her own affairs?—It is
 “ in such a manner, as proves, that she still con-
 “ siders herself as your rightful sovereign, and you
 “ as revolted subjects, on whom she confers a
 “ favour, in remitting some part of your merited
 “ punishment. Though baffled so often, and
 “ disgraced, she still treats with you as a superior;
 “ and thinks the honour of her alliance cheaply
 “ purchased by you, at the expence of national
 “ honour and independence. Yes, that very in-
 “ dependence which you possess as absolutely as
 “ any people in the universe, she pretends to mo-
 “ dify, and graciously contenting herself with
 “ bereaving you of more than half your rights,
 “ is willing that you should hold the rest by the
 “ charter of her concession. But it is impossible

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“ that

“ that you should be deceived by such contemptible arts as these; or accept the olive as a pledge of peace, whose leaves are incapable of concealing the serpent which entwines its branches. Her offers are too openly insidious, and the malignity of her intentions breaks forth too glaringly, through the veil of dissembled friendship, with which she endeavours to conceal it. She sees the impossibility of conquering you in the field, and therefore has recourse to negotiations, which she hopes may win their way where arms would fail. She wishes to make you lose the confidence of your allies, and the esteem of Europe; thus will you be the more exposed to her future machinations. She wishes to scatter feuds, disunion and distrust amongst the several states that compose the American confederacy, and to arm them one against the other, that the whole may be more easily oppressed and enslaved. This is the reason why she refuses to treat with those whom you have appointed to be the arbiters of peace and war. She knows too well their vigilance, their prudence, their inflexibility; she fears to meet the guardians of your liberty in council, as much as to encounter your armies in the field; she therefore endeavours to ensnare the ignorance and credulity of individuals, and by scattering secret discontents and jealousies, to open a way for her usurpations. But governments

“vernments that are founded upon principles
 “of justice, and who claim no power but what
 “is given them by common suffrage, are unac-
 “quainted with the fears and low suspicions
 “which never fail to accompany tyranny. We
 “therefore submit her proposals to you, con-
 “scious that there is but one light in which every
 “friend to American liberty can consider them.
 “Nor do we fear, that those who have toiled so
 “nobly through such a contest, to establish the
 “foundations of the only free governments in the
 “universe, will tamely yield, without an equiva-
 “lent, the reward of all their labours.”

Should any one be disposed to treat me as the
 advocate of American independence for expa-
 tiating upon these topics; without either confessing
 or denying the charge, I must observe, that it is
 entirely foreign to the purpose. No one can
 doubt that the Congress will refuse our overtures
 for the future dependence of America, should such
 overtures be made. Nor will they be contented
 with a simple refusal; it is equally certain, that
 they will employ their whole address to represent
 these overtures in the blackest colours to the
 body of the people. Whether they are actuated
 by a noble ambition of raising the glory of their
 country, or by the low desire of preserving their
 own authority alone, this will equally be their
 conduct. Even the advocates for proposing to
 the Americans terms similar to those we have

granted the Irish, are of this opinion ; since they assert, that neither the agents of the French, nor of the Congress, will be able to prevent the reconciliation which they imagine must be the consequence of such liberal concessions. No one therefore can accuse me of singularity for entertaining an opinion, which is even admitted by those who differ widely from me as to the rest ; and the reflections which I have attributed to the Congress, are such as must present themselves even to the most superficial understandings.

Placed as I am, at an awful distance from the profound mysteries of government, I cannot pretend to decypher accurately the intentions of our rulers. Many circumstances may make it inexpedient that the mazes of state-policy should be exposed to vulgar eyes ; and therefore we ought to wait with a becoming patience, for the success of those negociations which are now carrying on. But it is impossible for any man who has been an anxious witness of the public calamities, during the present ill-omened contest, not to form conjectures about the future. These conjectures it is the distinguished privilege of every Englishman to dare to offer to the public ; the meanest citizen enjoys this right in common with the proudest ; and the experience of some past years does not tend to prove, that either virtue or ability is engrossed by those who possess the highest stations,

I shall

I shall therefore observe, that the terms now offered to the Americans, either contain an acknowledgment of their independence, or proposals for some limited dependence on this country. In the first case, there is little reason to doubt, that they will be attended with the desired success: and a peace will be no longer delayed than till the different claims of the contending parties can be adjusted. On the second supposition, I will venture to predict, that all proposals for the dependence of America on Great-Britain, however modified, will be rejected with scorn by the Congress, and all the ruling powers in that country. I have sufficiently stated my reasons for this assertion; but it is a speculation of the most interesting nature to enquire, what will be the conduct of our ministers in case of such a refusal.

Some persons may possess that fervour of imagination which may lead them to think, that the revolution of power in this country will produce a similar one on the other side of the Atlantic. They doubtless dream, that when the British offers shall be dispersed over the country, the people will either compel their rulers to accept them, or take up arms to depose both Magistrates and Congress; that all America will forget both republicanism and independence, and unite to celebrate the praises of a patriot administration, in a transport of gratitude and loyalty. As to myself, whatever joy it would give me to see the inhabitants of

Boston

Boston and Philadelphia approaching the throne with loyal and constitutional addresses, I cannot help fearing, that we are far removed from such an auspicious æra. We know that the attachment of mankind, either to national manners or forms of government, bears no proportion to the comparative excellence of the objects; if indeed it be possible to establish a criterion to judge of things which are reducible to no common principles, and which vary with every gust of national prejudice or opinion. All the representations of European elegance or enjoyment would no more tempt a Kamtschatkan from his cave, or an Iroquois from his forest, than the love of savage liberty and independence would induce an English nobleman to throw aside the trappings of his exalted station, and take refuge in eternal snows, or pathless deserts. How often do we see the opinions that in one country are treated as the excess of wickedness and impiety, consecrated by altars, priests, and temples, amidst their neighbours; while the reverence for a particular name or family, which is considered as loyalty and honour on one side of a river or mountain, shall be reprobated as treason and rebellion on the other!—Whatever reverence, therefore, we may feel for the English constitution, whatever blessings we may imagine it capable of imparting, it is impossible to deny, that the Americans may entertain very different ideas upon the subject. The splendour

dour of a court, the advantages of an hereditary monarchy, the sacred name of King itself may be in some minds so strongly associated with the ideas of unlimited power, and the purpose of enslaving mankind, that they may excite no favourable impressions. Whether from reason, obstinacy, or error, we know that these are the sentiments of the Americans; at least a large, if not the largest part of this nation has been accustomed to represent them in this light. But if the natural bent of their dispositions has long inclined them to independence and republicanism, it will be difficult to assign a reason why they should entertain more moderate ideas at present.

But should they persist in these ideas, should they reject the offered terms with the contempt which I am persuaded they will feel for every proposal of dependence, what conduct is this country to observe?—Are we to depart, at length, from all our lofty pretensions, and grant the long-contested boon; are all the fine-spun schemes of political connection to be dissolved; all hopes of returning allegiance to be sacrificed; are fifty thousand lives, and an hundred millions of treasure to be wasted in vain, and only to cement the foundation of thirteen republican states; or will our ministers, animated by a noble despair, pass all the bounds which they had before prescribed, and heedless alike of their own professions and the infamy which must attend such
gross

gross inconsistency, openly engage themselves in a new war to subdue the Colonies ?

This enquiry is of so much importance, that the illustrious characters who compose the present administration will certainly give the people complete satisfaction upon the subject. They know how much we have already suffered, how repeatedly the public confidence has been abused already by former ministers ; they have long and feelingly arraigned the base duplicity and falsehood which used to prevail in our councils ; and it is to rescue us from evils like these, not from avarice or ambition, or the selfish desire of advancing themselves upon the ruin of others, that they have accepted the reins of government ; every motive of honour, shame, consistency must incline them to a nobler conduct ; nor will they deceive our wishes, or adopt the execrable arts to which we owe so many miseries.

Should they therefore be convinced that the dignity of the crown, the spirit of the constitution, the unity of the empire, require new wars, new sacrifices, and the imposition of heavier burthens, they will at least treat the public with sincerity, and acquaint it with the important change in their sentiments. This change may indeed happen, because there is the greatest difference between a Ministry and an Opposition, and many sources of information and motives of conduct must occur to the one which are totally denied the

the other. But they will lay before us the reasons which they now find to expect success, in schemes which they have so often declared impracticable; they will state the remaining resources of the nation that inspire them with these hopes, the intended expence and probable duration of the war. They will not inveigle us from year to year with false estimates and fallacious hopes; nor will they delude the unwary innocence of the country gentlemen with promises of lowering their taxes from the confiscations and forfeitures of America. Should it be necessary to send over new armies with better auspices, they will not do it under the mean pretence of defending ports, or garrisoning towns. They will also, I hope, think it necessary to assign the limits of their own exertions, and the period at which we may expect some respite, whatever be the fortunes of the war. Wherever these limits may be fixed, whether at public bankruptcy, a seizure of all private property for the use of government, or the general depopulation of the land, it will be some alleviation of our distresses, to look forward to a certain termination; and it will enable those who want faith or loyalty to wait the last extremity, to seek over the habitable globe some asylum from the blessings of the English constitution.

In the mean time, I shall endeavour to state those reasons which induce me to believe, that our present administration have either already acceded

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to

to the independence of America, or mean to do it, if that condition should be insisted upon as a preliminary of peace. Those gentlemen while they were out of power have been accustomed to make the American war the subject of their severest and most popular invectives. According to them, the design to subdue the colonies was equally unjust, absurd, and ruinous. All the forces of the British empire were inadequate to such an attempt, and public bankruptcy must be the necessary consequence of persisting in the enterprize. With what energy, with what eloquence have they descanted upon our declining commerce, our involved finances, the distresses of our country-gentlemen, the miseries of the poor, and all the complicated calamities which this unnatural quarrel has produced ! How often and how feelingly have they adjured the late administration to stop the ravages of war, to restore peace to an exhausted nation, and to offer the Americans such terms as they were likely to accept ! With these sentiments, so often, and so solemnly expressed, they have entered upon the management of public affairs, in order to rescue their country from its difficulties by a speedy peace. But it is impossible they could mistake the terms upon which alone it was attainable. They were not ignorant of the treaties the Americans had entered into with France, of the answers of the Congress to former propositions, of the representations of the American

American agents ; every thing concurred to enforce the necessity of independence, as a preliminary or condition of peace. Unless therefore they intended giving up this article, their invectives and their professions must have been alike empty and insincere. For what was the crime of the last administration, at least after the commencement of the war, and the treaty of alliance, but refusing to grant the independence of America, and prosecuting the war to make her forego that claim ? That administration never refused to treat on terms short of independence, nor did the Americans ever make any conciliatory proposals to that purpose since the year 1776. But those ministers had repeatedly declared, that they never would acknowledge the independence of America, or desist from war till the colonies had given up the claim ; and it was to save us from the inevitable ruin which must have attended so rash and absurd a resolution, that the rising spirit of the nation has produced the present happy change. But this change has not been effected merely that the people might be amused with a vain shadow of negociation ; this was a task for which our late ministers were as well qualified as their successors. Nor was it from the hope that the Americans would recede from their haughty declarations of independence, in favour of a new administration ; such a system might amuse the politicians of a coffee-house, or the editor of a newspaper, but was

too ridiculous and unfounded to be adopted by men of sense, who possessed the genuine sources of information. Least of all was it, merely that the conduct of the war might be shuffled from one hand to another : it is the war itself, and not the management of it, that the late opposition have so successfully arraigned ; nor have they ever succeeded so well in proving the incapacity of the late ministers for carrying it on, as in demonstrating that the proposed end itself was chimerical, unjust, and unattainable. But it was to stop the ravages of that pernicious war ; to vindicate our declining commerce and agriculture from new and more intolerable burthens * ; to restore plenty to their country, and peace to Europe, that men of milder principles, the patrons of public liberty, and the genuine friends of the people, have been elevated to the honours they now enjoy.

Hence it seems to follow, that every friend of the present administration should strenuously vindicate them from the suspicion of meditating any coercive war against America. Such a charge must either include the excess of folly or duplicity :---folly, if they alone were ignorant of facts which every man of common abilities or information clearly understood ; and duplicity, if all their declamations in favour of peace meant no-

* See the concluding observations.

thing more than to acquire the management of the war. But that degree of ignorance was absolutely impossible : nothing therefore remains but to accuse them of the grossest insincerity. For if, in the present situation of England, the public interest required that we should carry on a war to reduce our colonies to some modified degree of dependence, what must we think of men who have uniformly opposed the very measures they are compelled to adopt at last ? We know too well the uncertain nature of war ; that an opportunity once lost is frequently never to be regained ; and the influence which the opinion of vigour and perseverance exercises over the minds of men ; so great and universal, that mankind are much oftener conquered by their own fears than by the prowess of their enemies. The last ministry had some title to both these qualities ; they lavished the blood and treasures of the nation as profusely as if centuries of duration were comprized in the present moment, and as if America once nominally subdued would set us free from any future struggle ; nor did they ever pretend to humanity or remorse* ;

* “ The policy, as well as the benevolence of Great-Britain has hitherto checked the extremes of war, when they tended to distress a people, still considered as fellow-subjects, and to desolate a country, shortly to become again a source of mutual advantage ; but when that country professes the unnatural design, not only of estranging herself from us, but of mortgaging herself and her resources

they plainly declared, with a most laudable sincerity, that if they could not conquer America, they wished to render it an uninhabited desert, a smoking pile of ruins. This was plain and manly; it was also consistent with a certain set of principles, which has generally had the sanction of divines, and, for the curse of human nature, has always been the favourite creed of princes and statesmen. But what would have been the conduct of their antagonists upon the supposition I am now examining? Equally convinced of the fatal necessity of these measures, they must have used their whole address and influence to render them abortive, when their success would have been attended with less loss and bloodshed than it would be at present; or else, against their own conviction, they must become the ministers of cruelty and injustice, and desolate the world merely that they may preserve their places*. The celebrated vote of the House of Commons against prosecuting an offensive war with America, was

“to our enemies, the whole contest is changed; and the question is, How far Great Britain may, by every means in her power, destroy, or render useless, a connection contrived for her ruin, and for the aggrandizement of France.

“Under such circumstances, the laws of self-preservation must direct the conduct of Great Britain; and if the British Colonies are to become an accession to France, will direct her to render that accession of as little avail as possible to her enemy.” Manifesto of the British Commissioners.

* Perhaps it may be necessary to read, “that they may regain their places.”

certainly

certainly the work of the late minority; and this vote was a plain confession to all the world of our weakness and inability to pursue the war. That vote, with more than magic force, arrested all our military operations, disarmed our veteran bands, and added confidence and intrepidity to their enemies. That vote was a complete abdication of all our boasted sovereignty over America, and gave additional stability both to the Provincial governments and the authority of the Congress. For is it possible, that after such a declaration we could invite a single American to join our banners, or expose ourselves to his derision, by promising our protection? To me indeed, and to every man that is not possessed with the chimerical rage of making conquests, that vote appeared the only mark of public sanity which we have shewn for many years. Considered as the pledge and harbinger of approaching peace, it seemed wisely calculated to abate the animosity of the colonies, and merited all our gratitude and approbation; but if it was nothing more than a public leger-de-main to juggle the cards out of one hand into another, it certainly was the grossest instance of public absurdity that ever was exhibited. Nor would it solve the objection to suppose, that no offensive war was to be waged with the Americans, but only with the French, till they gave up the treaty of alliance and the independence of the colonies. If the French demand immoderate terms of peace,

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we shall be compelled to carry on a war, not against the independence of America, but for our defence. But it will be necessary to prove this in a satisfactory manner, both to this nation and to Europe at large, by exposing the terms that had been offered by us, and refused by them, otherwise it must appear the vilest political quibble that ever disgraced a nation; and only intended to lull one enemy asleep, till we had dispatched the rest, and could return with additional force for his destruction. Such conduct, I am afraid, instead of serving, would only prejudice our cause in the eyes of all mankind, by adding the imputation of treachery to that of violence; and would so totally alienate the Americans, by raising unconquerable suspicions of our sincerity, as would render all reconciliation impossible.

Nothing therefore remains but to suppose, that as our ministers are men of sense, and pledged to the people by every motive that can act on generous minds, they really mean to pursue that conduct which honour and public utility equally require; and to give us that peace, which it is certainly in their power to bestow, and which our difficulties and distresses so loudly demand. This is certainly the wish of the founder, and I believe at present of the most numerous part of the nation; and the experience of every hour will add new converts to the opinion. Whatever may be the frantic exultations or chimerical projects of a few,

few, the wiser individuals of every party, think that we have made a sufficient trial of fortune, and that the present strength of our enemies is so over-proportioned to our own, that it is a sufficient glory to have been so well able to act upon the defensive. They see that the project of destroying the navies of France, Spain and Holland, is as chimerical as it is unjust; and that were it more practicable than it is, the rest of Europe is too intent upon its own commercial interests, to suffer the balance of naval power to be entirely destroyed, and so great an accession of strength thrown into hands that have not always used it with the greatest moderation. As to America, all parties are now agreed, excepting a few hot-headed zealots, that she has nothing to fear from the attacks of England; and that no future connection can subsist between the two countries, but the voluntary ties of friendship and mutual interest.

In this situation, every thing concurs to make the people desirous of accepting peace, and to induce the ministry to grant it. Every order of men will rejoice to see a termination of public difficulties and impositions, excepting the few who might have promoted a vile, partial interest, by the continuation of the war. Whatever may be the murmurs of that set of men, they will soon subside, extinguished by the voice of a grateful nation, that will sooner or later learn, by its own comparative feelings, the difference between a full

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and safe enjoyment of the fruits of its industry, a circumstance so necessary to all, and the empty triumphs of such a war as we now carry on, always balanced by contrary fortune, and attended by increasing poverty and distress. These reflexions appear to me so solid and unanswerable, and at the same time so important to this country in the present moment, that I could not resist the impulse of laying them before the public, whatever personal danger or inconvenience may attend the publication of unpalatable truths, so little disguised by artifice or flattery, that they may disgust even those who cannot dispute their authority.

It may be asked, why I alone have thus stood forth, and pretended to instruct a nation. Many will tax me with folly and presumption; many will arraign me as the friend of America, and enemy to the glory of my country; some may perhaps accuse me of secret interest, or disguised ambition. As to any of these charges, I should consider them with indifference and contempt, did not the nature of my subject itself prevent me from passing them over in silence. I shall therefore observe, that what I have here advanced, is little calculated to gain me either patronage or popularity; none but the real, disinterested friends of their country will either excuse the doctrines, or the boldness with which they are enforced; and the only character I can ever expect to gain
by

by means like these, is, that of a turbulent, discontented man, incapable of leaguings with any party, and dangerous to all. As to the presumption which I have used, it is no greater than becomes a man; than, I think, becomes an Englishman: every one is equally interested in the welfare of that society of which he is a member; the meanest can but lose his all in common with the greatest; nor are the trappings of state and gewgaws of a crown of more importance to the monarch, than his cottage and humble fare to a peasant: neither nature, reason, or justice, has given to a few individuals the right of judging for all the rest.

But as to the heavier charge of favouring the liberties of America, far from attempting an apology, I shall both confess and glory in the accusation. England is indeed my country; there was a time when I gloried in the name; and I will presume to say, that few have shewn themselves more completely English, either in their principles or conduct, than myself. But I have never been able to cherish an exclusive partiality for any country at the expence of justice and humanity; and were I capable of doing it, the result of all my experience tends to convince me, that the real interest of no society ever was, or will be promoted by systems which contradict the plainest principles of morality. The widest range of empire, the most uninterrupted successes which

have attended the guilty projects of ambition, have never produced any other effect, than that of hurrying nations so much the more rapidly to their decline.

And much would it conduce both to the security and happiness of mankind, were this great truth more clearly understood, or more universally adopted as the principle of action. We might then expect to see honest ends pursued by honourable means; and a care of the essential interests of the people substituted to the paltry intrigues and machinations which have so long been the disgrace of courts and statesmen. Those who claimed superior privileges, or engrossed the powers and distinctions of society, would think it necessary to deserve them by other arts than a contemptible luxury, an habitual practice of low dissimulation, or a blind acquiescence in those pernicious schemes which alike sap the foundations of liberty and public happiness. In peace, we should see them intent on repairing the ravages of war, improving every mean of national defence, regulating the morals, and adding to the convenience of the people. Their care and wisdom would correct every abuse, before it encreased to a dangerous magnitude; nor would the art of legislation remain the greatest reproach to the human understanding, and the least improved by the progress of reason and philosophy. The laws, whose clearness and intelligibility are so essential to the happiness

happiness of the people, would be adapted to common use and understandings; not by reducing them to one general principle of promiscuous despotism, an improvement which many of their professors are so desirous of introducing, but by disentangling them from the customs and perplexity of barbarous ages, from the doubtful force of contrary decisions, and all the unmeaning rubbish in which they are now involved. Commerce and agriculture would flourish, not by the regulations of Boards of Trade, or the thousand absurd and contradictory provisions which disgrace our statutes, and deter the honest mechanic from the exertion of his ingenuity, but by securing to every man the produce of his labours, freeing industry from unnecessary restraints, and bounding the incroachments of that all-devouring monster the excise*. Were it necessary to engage in wars, they would be so clearly just and unavoidable, that there could be no dispute about the expedience of supporting them: a wise œconomy would manage those resources which are drawn from the labours of the people, nor would the public confidence itself be made a reason for its abuse, or the public patience an apology for the profusion of a government.

These indeed are visionary schemes, sufficient to interrupt the gravity of a minister, should he

* See the concluding Observations.

condescend to read them, or move the risibility of a financier. The deeper projects of modern policy are of a very different nature: they consist in melting down the vigour of a nation by private and public corruption, tolerating every species of abuse, invading the people's property by intolerable taxes, and under that pretence subjecting the most innocent and indifferent actions to restraint *. Wars of the most destructive nature are entered upon for every purpose but that of national utility; and peace itself brings no alleviation of public burthens, nor always prevents their accumulation. At length, unnerved and harrassed, entangled on every side with the inextricable web of debts, taxes, and penal laws, as well as infected with the secret venom of all-pervading influence, a brave and generous people resigns all claim to privileges it has long disused, forgets that ever it was free, and sinks into the eternal sleep of servitude.

And so universal have been these arts, so general their success, that when we contemplate the different regions of the globe, we shall find they have almost all in turn become the victims of avarice and ambition. Asia has been the seat of immemorial tyranny; Africa sees all its coasts depopulated to satisfy the demand of Christian luxury for slaves; Europe itself is on the point of yield-

* See the concluding Observations.

ing to the common destiny. Government, that partial benefit, but universal evil, becomes even from the moment of its institution, the engine by which the interests of the many are submitted to the caprices of the few. But moderate at first in its pretensions, and fearful of exciting too powerful an odium, it veils its baneful innovations under the semblance of order, public safety, and national defence. At length, like a stream, which, flowing through an immense extent, has been gradually swelled into a torrent by the accession of a thousand rivulets, it rises over every barrier, and deluges all with irresistible fury. Mankind have then no other choice, but to worship the idols of their own creation, or to be exterminated by the sword which they have foolishly trusted to their hands. From that instant, there are no bounds to insolence on one side, or degradation on the other. The noblest empires seem only created for the sport and riot of a few conceited families; all the productions of the earth are monopolized; the elements themselves become subject to human pride; and man, that believes himself the lord of all, is the only animal that starves amidst universal plenty.

This is the progress of every government; and however retarded in its course, it as invariably tends to despotism as rivers seek the sea by the laws of gravitation. Can any generous or humane mind, therefore, that is convinced of this truth,

truth, behold with disapprobation the struggles which are made in any corner of the globe for liberty? Will he not wish to see the spoilers of the world, the enemies of common happiness, checked in their course, and new asylums opened to the suffering part of the species? But should the contest happen in the very country of which he is a member, will not a much more powerful motive intervene, his own immediate interest; at least if he has learned to attach other ideas to the term than that of personal ease or safety, or the wish to share the plunder, and riot in the spoils of others?

It is upon these motives that I confess I have uniformly detested the American war. No example could arise from the subjugation of that country, excepting a repetition of the common cruelties, which under the name of justice or policy are practised in all conquered countries; and particularly in those where public violence is stimulated and excused by civil animosity. The least that could have been expected, would have been executions, banishment, confiscations of property, and the establishment of a military government to extinguish every spark of liberty before it should begin to flame. I cannot pretend to assign the limits of ministerial mercy; but those that begin by invading every acknowledged right, and demolishing every public barrier, will rarely end by replacing

replacing them *. On the contrary, the success of the United States affords an awful spectacle, which

* " —But an English individual may by the supreme authority be deprived of liberty, and a colony divested of its powers, for reasons of which that authority is the only judge." *Taxation no Tyranny*, p. 24.

" The charter therefore by which provincial governments are constituted, may be always legally, and where it is either inconvenient in its nature, or misapplied in its use, may be equitably repealed; and by such repeal the whole fabrick of subordination is immediately destroyed, the constitution sunk at once into a chaos, the society is dissolved into a tumult of individuals, without authority to command or obligation to obey." *Ibid.* p. 28.

" The Legislature of a colony, let not the comparison be too much disdained, is only the vestry of a larger parish."

Ibid. p. 44.

" When they apply to our compassion, by telling us, that they are to be carried from their own country to be tried for certain offences, we are not so ready to pity them, as to advise them not to offend." *Ibid.* p. 59.

" If they are condemned unheard, it is because there is no need of a trial. The crime is manifest and notorious."

Ibid. p. 60.

" Let us give the Indians arms, and teach them discipline, and encourage them now and then to plunder a plantation. Security and leisure are the parents of sedition." *Ibid.* p. 84.

" If their obstinacy continues without actual hostilities, it may perhaps be mollified by turning out the soldiers to free quarters, forbidding any personal cruelty or hurt."

Ibid. p. 85.

" Nothing can be more noxious to society, than that erroneous clemency, which, when a rebellion is suppressed, exacts no forfeiture, and establishes no securities, but leaves the rebels in their former state." *Ibid.* p. 87.

" Their charters being now, I suppose, legally forfeited, may be modelled as shall appear most commodious to the mother-country. Thus the privileges which are found by experience liable to misuse, will be taken away, and those who now bellow as patriots, bluster as soldiers, and domineer as legislators, will sink into sober merchants and silent planters, peaceably diligent, and securely rich."

Ibid. p. 88.

cannot be too often renewed for the instruction of mankind, and the information of sovereigns. It teaches the possessors of power to use that power with moderation, unless they would incur the hazard of losing what is so dear to their ambition. It teaches mankind at large, that neither the vaunted prowess of mercenary armies, the possession of unequalled riches, fleets that command the ocean, or all the resources of established authority, are sufficient to prevail over minds that have once determined to meet death rather than submit to slavery. Above all, the establishment of so many free states upon the purest principles of civil and religious liberty, affords the most consolatory prospects to every friend of humanity. The same spirit which has directed their foundations may still extend their limits, till the immense continent of America become the seat of happiness and population, and the refuge of all the miserable, from European tyranny. How different is this view of things from that which the narrow schemes of selfish policy would have presented ! that policy which, rather than emancipate mankind, wished to wage war with Providence, and stop the course of nature ; to desolate the noblest portion of the universe ; and rather make it the receptacle of noxious reptiles and beasts of prey, than suffer it to be inhabited by men that dare to think for themselves, and defend the privileges of their existence.

These were the general principles upon which I always reprobated the American war ; but when
I considered

I considered its probable consequences upon the safety and happiness of this country, motives of private interest concurred to augment my just abhorrence. It was too evidently begun upon principles which had no connection with public utility, however the public credulity might be ensnared to suffer its continuance. The interest of every people consists in a due administration of the laws which defend their persons and their property, in a plenty of those things which the sustenance of life requires, and in a freedom from those restraints and impositions which have so baneful an effect on commerce and agriculture in other parts of the world *. Could any thinking man believe, that

* “ Ces encouragemens, pour la propagation du genre humain, paroîtront peut-être singuliers et même superflus à bien des gens ; mais ils changeront de sentimens, lorsqu'ils seront instruits, comme on le sçait par le rapport de différens curés, que beaucoup de paysans ne veulent plus faire d'enfans ou s'en tiennent à un très-petit nombre, pendant qu'ils en pourroient avoir d'avantage.” P. 236.

“ Personne n'ignore que l'agriculture est la base de la prospérité des états ; leur puissance augmentée ou diminuée en proportion de ce qu'elle s'accroît ou s'affoiblit.” P. 250.

“ Pour rétablir la culture des terres si fort négligée dans ce royaume, ainsi que je l'ai dit, il ne faut employer que des moyens libres et point de forces, qui ne réussiroient pas. L'agriculture, source de toutes les richesses, mere du commerce et des arts, ne veut pas plus être gênée que ses enfans, il est nécessaire de l'exciter, de l'encourager, mais lorsqu'on veut la contraindre, elle s'anéantit et disparaît avec eux ; tout système de finance, auquel elle ne servira point de fondement, ne sera qu'une vaine chimere, et qu'un bâtiment édifié sur la sable, prêt à écrouler à chaque instant.” P. 251.

“ Notre administration intérieure tend directement à décourager les cultivateurs, fatigués par les fréquentes visites des différens commis et employés, dont le nombre prodigieux ôte des bras à l'agriculture et coûte des frais immenses à l'état. Exposés à se voir ruinés d'un moment à

these salutary ends would be promoted by the desolation of America, and the destruction of its inhabitants?—Those gentlemen and merchants who assented to the measure, with the laudable intention of lowering their taxes, and encreasing their markets, must explain their own ideas: to me it always appeared evident, that war could neither promote our commerce, nor diminish our burthens. Could the burning of towns, and the destroying every species of property, increase the American demand for British commodities, or contribute to the employment of our manufacturers? As much as the extinction of liberty in America, and the establishment of a military government there, would have tended to preserve our rights at home, and diffuse the blessings of the English constitution.

But every thing that the opposers of that disastrous war predicted at its commencement, has since been fatally accomplished. Our burthens, instead of being diminished, are increased to that enormous magnitude which threatens the annihilation of commerce and agriculture. The neighbouring nations of Europe, instead of viewing with indifference or applause the chastisement of our rebellious colonies, have ranged themselves on their side, as was foretold; and whatever may

“ l'autre par leurs procès-verbeaux, ils tremblent toutes les fois qu'ils les voyent arriver chez eux.” P. 260.

These passages are all taken from *Memoire sur les Désfrichemens, par le Marquis de Tourbilly*; a book which, although written by a Frenchman, contains, in my opinion, more sound sense, genuine political knowledge, and enlightened humanity (I speak with diffidence) than the forty-six volumes in folio of the Journals of at least since the commencement of the present century.

have

have been the original strength of the Americans, they have been so well supported by our ancient enemies and rivals, as to baffle all our past, and to be secure from all our future attempts. Instead of that contribution which was the avowed object of the war, we have lost the monopoly of their commerce, and must become, if we wish to regain any part of it, suppliants to those whom we disdained to acknowledge as our equals. More than an hundred millions have been already squandered without the reduction of a single province; and more taxes imposed on national industry than, I will venture to say, the exertion of ministerial economy will deliver us from in the ensuing century; though it should uniformly proceed in the same rapid torrent with which it has begun.

In the midst of these distresses, a gleam of hope breaks forth, if we deign to profit by our past miscarriages, and to learn wisdom from misfortune. Our late successes will facilitate the means of peace, if we are seriously inclined to propose or accept the terms which are adapted to our situation. Our enemies, wearied with the ravages and losses of a doubtful war, will easily consent to breathe from their toils; the Americans will gladly return to their former peaceable occupations; and all Europe will lose its jealousy of a nation, that even in the midst of victory can resign the spirit of conquest.

But perhaps the measure of our calamities is not yet full, and the pride and folly which have

so

so long opposed our happiness, may demand severer expiations than any we have yet offered. Our late successes, indecisive as they are, and inadequate to any other object than the acquisition of peace, may raise new dreams of conquest, and renew the general infatuation. A people long accustomed to be deceived, too proud to yield, too indolent to reflect, too corrupted to be just or humane, may insist on kindling again the flames of war, and deluging the earth with blood. A minister selfish and interested like his predecessors, may feel more attachment to pomp and power than to the essential interests of his country. With boundless ambition, but a contracted heart, he may take advantage of popular delusions to violate his own professions; or, yielding to that mighty influence against which he has so long declaimed, may steer the public vessel towards the very shoals he has so repeatedly pointed out, and, instead of making the port, seek for refuge amidst the storm.

In this case, I cannot expect to avoid the general fate, or to escape that ruin against which I have in vain endeavoured to warn my country. But amidst all the calamities which I foresee will burst upon us, it will be some consolation to me, to have discharged the duties of a virtuous citizen; and without interest or ambition, without even the wish or hope of fame, to have opposed myself to the stream of public prejudice, and enforced those salutary truths, upon which depend the safety and happiness of the people.

SOME
OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

EXCISE-LAWS.

AS some of my readers may be unacquainted with the equity and mildness of the excise-laws in this free country, I shall take the liberty of specifying some few of the penalties which are inflicted by them.

By 5 Geo. III. c. 43. a penalty of 20l. upon every brewer who shall alter the position of any tun, cooler, &c. after the same has been set up, without giving notice in writing to the excise-officer.

By 11 Will. III. c. 21. a penalty of 100l. upon any brewer who shall use molasses, coarse sugar, honey or composition, or extract of sugar, in the brewing or working of his beer.

By the same act the same penalty upon every brewer who shall receive, or take into his custody, any quantity of these ingredients exceeding ten pounds. N. B. It is probable that the ingenious fabricators

fabricators of these two clauses did not know that the constituent part of all fermented liquors is nothing but sugar; consequently, all wort is only an extract of sugar, and every brewer that uses malt is subject to this penalty.

By the same act a penalty of 20*l.* or in default three months imprisonment upon every brewer's servant, or other person who shall be aiding in the crime of using any of these ingredients, or in conveying them into the house, brew-house, or other place belonging to such brewer. N. B. By this act any porter that carries eleven pounds of treacle or sugar to a brewer's house is subject to three months imprisonment.

By 11 Geo. I. c. 30. if any officer, on his searching any un-entered place, shall find candles either made or making, or tallow or other materials melting or melted, or cottons or rushes spread, or any copper, mould, or other utensil warm with tallow, &c. this shall be sufficient evidence to convict the offender, and subject him to the penalty of 100*l.* N. B. By this clause, I should suppose every man that keeps candles in his house, or melts grease for his cart-wheels, is subject to the penalty of 100*l.*

By 8 Ann. c. 9. a penalty of 40*l.* upon every person who shall use, or cause to be used in the inside of his dwelling-house, any lamp wherein any oil or fat (other than oil made of fish within Great Britain) shall be burnt for giving light.—

Thus

Thus we see the wisdom of our parliament is not above the meanest offices, or the most degrading attentions. What an awful idea must it give foreign nations of our government, and what must be its care and circumspection in every weightier concern, when we thus see the Sovereign, the Lords spiritual and temporal, together with the virtual representatives of the people, gravely controuling the kitchens of the subject, and deciding in what manner he shall light himself to bed!

By 10 Geo. I. c. 10. a penalty of 200l. upon every person who shall make chocolate without making entry at the office, &c. Nevertheless, in consideration of the rights of free-born Englishmen, the following most gracious clause is added: That upon three days notice the officer may give private persons permission to make ditto for private use only, but not less than half an hundred weight of cocoa nuts at each time; and if within three days after finishing, it is not entered, brought to be stamped, and the duty paid, the person for whom the same shall be made, shall forfeit treble the value thereof.

By 12 Geo. I. c. 28. no dealer in cocoa-nuts shall dispose of less than twenty-eight pounds at a time, and then shall enter, in writing, the name and place of abode of the buyer, and on demand produce such account to the officer, on pain of forfeiting

forfeiting 20l. for each pound of cocoa-nuts, and 20l. for default of entry.

By 9 Geo. II. c. 35. on information upon oath before any justice, that any person is lurking within five miles of the sea-coast or a navigable river, and that there is reason to suspect that he waits with intent to be assisting in the running of goods, such justice may grant a warrant for apprehending him; when, on his not giving a satisfactory account of himself, he shall be committed to the house of correction, there to be whipped and kept to hard labour not exceeding one month.—Here is a new crime created, “*novum et inauditum scelus*,” that of being within five miles of a navigable river or the sea. Had the makers of this law been apprehended and brought before an honest justice of the peace, is it probable they would all have been able to give a *satisfactory account* of themselves?

By 33 Geo. II. c. 9. every person making or keeping any wash, cyder, or other material fit for distillation, and having in his possession any still or stills, containing, separately or together, ten gallons or upwards, shall be deemed a common distiller for sale, and liable to the survey and duties.

By 2 Geo. III. c. 5. no distiller or dealer in any sort of spirituous liquors shall have any still, or number of ditto, unless such, if a single one, or such ditto taken together shall contain at least

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one hundred gallons, on pain to forfeit for every such still 100l.

And such stills as shall contain separately less than one hundred gallons, shall be all placed in one room or workhouse, on pain to forfeit for every such still not so placed 100l.

By these clauses it appears, that every person who shall have in his possession a still of ten gallons, with any cyder, beer, &c. in his house, is a common distiller, whether he ever thought of distilling spirits or not, and is subject to the penalty of 100l. for not having stills to the amount of one hundred gallons.

By 6 Geo. I. every person who shall have in his custody above sixty-three gallons of arrack, rum, brandy, spirits, or strong waters, shall be deemed a dealer in such liquor.—I should be much afraid that most of our nobility and gentry, who pride themselves in keeping elegant tables, may by this act be proved common dealers. And were the law rigorously executed, what a check must it prove upon the only science which is at present studied by people of fashion, the science of the table!

By 12 Geo. III. c. 46. every distiller of low wines or spirits from corn, shall, before he begins to distil, provide at his own expence such fastenings to, &c. as shall be approved of in writing by the surveyor of the district, and shall also pay for

such locks and keys as shall be provided by the said surveyor ; and if any such shall presume to distil before such shall be provided, or shall refuse to pay for the locks, or to turn the discharge-cock of, &c. as required, he shall forfeit 50l.

By the same act, if any person, by any contrivance whatsoever, shall open any still-head, charge-cock, or wash-pump, after the same has been secured, before it shall be opened by the proper officer, or shall wilfully damage any lock or other fastening, he shall forfeit for every such offence 200l.

By 2 Geo. III. c. 5. No wash that shall be brewed for the extracting spirits for exportation, shall be pumped into the still but in the presence of an officer, and the low wines immediately run off into an entered vessel, and then kept till gauged ; and if any such distiller shall act contrary thereto, or obstruct the officer in the gauging, taking samples of the spirits, or trying the proofs, &c. or shall clandestinely convey away any of the spirits, or wash, or low wines, &c. he shall forfeit for every such offence 500l.

By 9 Ann. c. 12. every person whatsoever who shall plant, or have growing any hops, shall yearly, on or before August the first, give or send notice in writing under his hand, at the next office of excise, or to the officer of the district, of all the hop-grounds in his possession, and the names

names of the parish, township, or place wherein the same shall lie, with the names of the owner, tenant, or occupier thereof respectively, on pain of forfeiting 40s. for every acre.—This wise law I suppose was intended for the encouragement of agriculture; perhaps the same enlightened policy may hereafter extend it to all the productions of the country. The farmer is already subjected to the inquisitorial visits of ecclesiastical tyranny for every vegetable that grows: surely he will not complain to have the same privileges granted to the excise-man, for the exigencies of the state.—What a number of blessings have the Americans lost, in so obstinately refusing these most essential parts of the English constitution!

By 33 Geo. II. c. 7. no person making malt shall set up, alter, or use any utensil, or place for making or keeping of ditto, without first giving notice in writing to the proper officer, on pain of 50l.

By 3 Geo. III. c. 13. every maker of malt for home consumption, shall, at least, twenty-four hours before he shall begin to wet any corn for malt, give notice in writing to the officer, under penalty of 100l.

By the same act, if any maltster having given such notice, and begun to wet any corn, shall neglect or refuse to proceed to cover the whole with water, and to continue the same so covered, for the full space of forty hours from the time of its being

being first wet and covered, or shall begin to wet at any other time than between the hours of four in the morning and nine in the evening, he shall forfeit 100l.

By 10 Ann. c. 19. every person who shall make any paper, pasteboard, mildboard, or scale-board, or shall print, paint, or stain, any ditto, (for sale or not for sale) shall give notice in writing at the next office, of his name and place of abode, and when he intends to make the same, on pain of forfeiting 30l.

By 1 Ann. c. 21. if any person whatsoever shall remove or convey any salt from any salt-works, or place thereunto belonging, without due entry of the same, and payment of the duties thereof, or giving security for, or without warrant, ticket, or licence, any officer may not only seize the salt so removed, but also apprehend and carry such offender before a magistrate; when, if he shall not forthwith pay down the penalty, and no sufficient distress can be found whereupon to levy the same, he shall be committed to the house of correction, there to be whipped, and kept to hard labour, not exceeding one month.

By 5 Geo. III. c. 43. makers of hard soap are to provide proper covers (to be approved of in writing by the hand of the surveyor) to their coppers, pans, and other utensils, which the officer is to lock and seal down when the fire is damped, and the surveyor to provide the locks, keys, and
other

other fastenings, pipes, &c. at the expence of such maker; and if any ditto shall not provide such covers, or refuse to pay for the locks, or open any copper before the same is duly unlocked, he shall forfeit 20l.

And by the same act, any maker that shall open or cause to be opened any copper, pan, utensil, &c. &c. after the same shall be securely locked and sealed down by the officer, or shall wilfully break or damage any such lock, seal, &c. forfeits 100l.

By 10 Ann. c. 19. all persons before they shall make any starch, are to give notice in writing to the officer, of their names, places of abode, and of their work-houses, store-houses, &c. for keeping materials, and of all utensils for making, on pain of 50l.

By 10 Geo. I. c. 10. no coffee, tea, cocoa-nuts, chocolate, exceeding the quantity of six pounds weight, shall be removed, or carried from any part of this kingdom, by land or by water, without a permit or certificate, on pain of forfeiting the same.

By 12 Geo. III. c. 46. all dealers in and sellers of tea who shall receive into their custody any bohea, congo, fouchong, or other Pekoe tea, shall (on the most conspicuous part) mark each and every cannister, bag, jar, tub, box, cask, or other package in which they shall keep any ditto, with the word black; and also shall mark every cannis-

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ter, &c. in which they shall keep any other kind of tea than, &c. with the word green.

The officer who is to survey and take the stock of tea at the warehouse, &c. made use of for keeping tea by dealers, &c. shall keep a separate and distinct account of the black tea, and of the green tea; and if such officer shall find any increase, either of green or black tea, in the custody of any such dealer, over and above, &c. such increase shall be taken (unless accounted for) to be made by tea for which no duties were paid, and may be seized and carried away by such officer.

By the same act all dealers, &c. who shall sell or consume the same in small quantities, under the weight of six pounds, shall keep separate and distinct accounts of all the black tea and of all the green tea which they shall sell or consume in small quantities, in each day, under that weight, on pain of forfeiting 100l.

It is necessary to observe, that these clauses are all extracted from Mr. Addington's Abridgement of the Penal Statutes, and make but a very small part of the body of the excise-laws. The whole volume contains three thousand nine hundred and twenty crimes and offences, of which a very considerable portion, if not the greatest, is constituted by the acts which relate to the revenue. The taxes which have been imposed in order to subdue the Americans, and raise a revenue from them, which

which was the great object of our late most unequalled Financier, are sufficiently known ; I will therefore only mention the act for laying a tax upon servants, which, though perhaps intended only to affect the rich, has turned out a plentiful source of oppression to the poor. The clause is the following : “ Every master or mistress who
 “ shall retain or employ any male-servant in the capacity of maitre d’hotel, house-steward, &c. &c.
 “ &c. and the respective helpers in the stables, of such coachman, groom, or postillion, or *in the capacity of a gardener (not being a day-labourer)*
 “ park-keeper, game-keeper, &c. &c. respectively chargeable by the said act,” &c.

It should appear evident to common sense, that the exception of not being a day-labourer, admits that a person employed in the capacity of a gardener may be a day-labourer. Every one who is acquainted with the nature of the country knows, that it is not the circumstance of working in a garden or a field that constitutes a day-labourer, but that of being hired and retained by the day, for any kind of work that may be agreeable to his master. A man may plough, reap, mow, hedge, work in a garden, and if he is retained by the day, he certainly is a day-labourer ; or he may do all these, and if he is hired by the year, he is not a day-labourer. Nevertheless, upon several appeals from the Commissioners of the Excise, the opinion of the Judges has uniformly been, that if a man

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works a day in the gardens of fifty different persons, each of those persons is respectively subject to pay the tax of twenty shillings per annum, although his garden may not consist of twenty yards in extent, or contain twenty cabbages. From this cause, an universal terror has pervaded the country, and scarcely a farmer dares to prune a vine, or clip a gooseberry-tree in this land of freedom, from the fear of being metamorphosed into a gentleman, and forced to pay an annual tax for his gardener.

This appears to me a sufficient specimen of the equity and mildness of our excise-laws, that seem invented to plague, torment, and oppress the most useful and industrious part of mankind.

In our present situation, when we are debating whether we shall submit to an *inglorious peace*, as I hear it called in every coffee-house, or nobly engage in a fresh war, to annihilate the navies of France and Spain, I think it cannot be deemed foreign to my subject, if I turn the attention of my readers to the burthens we already suffer. I have remarked, that many of those most useful and necessary orders of men, stock-jobbers, contractors, and, indeed, gentlemen of almost every denomination, who now from the purest motives are ready to advance money for the public exigencies, contented with their own honest profits, and unincumbered by the difficulties which every new
tax

tax produces among the lower orders, are apt to consider this subject with rather too much indifference. A citizen, who without either trouble or ingenuity clears from twenty to an hundred thousand pounds by every loan, and fees at home the modest plenty of thirty or forty dishes to his dinner, is apt to forget that every ragout he eats, may have deprived an hundred of his fellow-creatures of their daily bread. But as to myself, (and I own there may be much selfishness in the case) as I have never had either merit or consequence enough to be offered place, pension, contract, or even a competent share in the new loan, I have no feelings but what are common to the great body of the people ; and, therefore, I cannot help wishing to preserve some small share of the patrimony and liberty which I have inherited by the laws of my country. I shall conclude with making the following reflections, which I submit to the consideration of the public, and which, whether true or false, certainly merit their whole attention.

It appears from the extracts I have given, and it will appear more clearly to whoever takes the trouble of consulting the excise-laws themselves in the statute-book, that every article of necessity and convenience in this free country is already burthened with the most oppressive impositions, which promise from all past experience to be perpetual.

That almost all our resources are already mortgaged, invaded, alienated; and that the mere political existence of the present system of government requires a degree of external commerce, and internal consumption, which it is very doubtful whether the necessities of the people will admit.

That our taxes and impositions are so numerous and varied, that it is now a science which I am told supports many worthy and respectable characters, to hunt after the few solitary manufactures, and privileged kinds of industry, which have hitherto escaped the claws of ministerial rapacity.

That this truth is so evident, that one of the last efforts of a late great Financier, from whom this country has received so many benefits, was a tax which struck at the root of all national industry, a tax upon inland carriage. It is very remarkable, that a similar tax is enumerated by Dr. Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*, as one of the causes of the decline of the Spanish monarchy.

That under the pretence of raising a revenue, every part of human life, and every employment of man (for I can scarcely call the contemptible pleasures and pursuits of the rich by that name), has been gradually monopolized by the government, and partly interdicted, partly subjected to the most odious and degrading restrictions.

That

That these restrictions being in their own nature most odious and intolerable to every ingenuous mind, consisting in exposing the house of almost every man that practises any useful trade or profession to the continual visits and insolence of excise-men, who are to have unlimited entrance all the day at their own demand, and all the night, with only the intervention of a constable, must have a most powerful influence in discouraging every species of useful industry : and I actually am acquainted with a gentleman who has just engaged in a considerable manufactory, which will save some hundred thousands a-year to this country, if it succeeds, who has refused the offer of having the duties taken off from the principal article of his consumption, rather than expose himself to the influence of the excise-laws.

Nor can I help remarking, that the same government which has with so little scruple invaded the dearest privileges of its subjects in indifferent matters, has thought fit to indulge them in the most unbounded licence, as to two of the most fatal vices which can infect the morals of the lower orders, gaming and drunkenness ; by the yearly lotteries which drain the poor of the capital of their scanty earnings ; and by ale-houses, which it has long been the established policy to encourage in every part of the kingdom.

I must also add, should it even expose me to the imputation of a libel, that the House of Commons,

mons, which, while it was under the immediate influence and controul of the people, was so remarkable for the parsimony of its grants, has, ever since the Revolution and the Septennial Act, acquired an indifference to the interests of the people, which would be absolutely incredible, did we not daily feel it in the increase of our burthens.

That the ease with which more than two hundred millions of the public money has been granted by our pretended representatives, without obtaining the redress of a single grievance, or a single stipulation in favour of the people, whose industry is taxed to pay the interest, may give us great lights into the nature of *virtual* representation; and enable us to guess the œconomy with which the property of the Americans would have been managed, could they have been brought to submit to virtual representation too.

That too many of the country-gentlemen, either with a shameful ignorance of all political knowledge, or with a still more criminal indifference, have been contented with the apparent immunity of their own property, since the beginning of the present century, and delivered up, one after another, every class of their fellow-citizens to a despotism equal or superior to what is exercised in the most slavish governments.

But that in this conduct, they have only exhibited

bited the contracted policy of a man who refuses his assistance to extinguish a fire, because it is a few houses removed from his own, without observing that the flame approaches nearer and nearer every instant to himself; for that, every other subject of taxation being exhausted, the necessities of a new war, or the mere deficiencies of a peace, may compel that measure which they can never think of without horror. And who will pity them, if they in turn experience the hardships they have been inflicting, who have so repeatedly sacrificed the public cause, and are, at this instant, discouraging the honest exertions of the people to procure a more equal representation, from the fear of losing their family-boroughs, and seeing an equal land-tax?

That the general spirit, industry, and ingenuity of the English people, animated by that portion of liberty which they have hitherto preserved, had produced the power and opulence which the nation enjoyed at the commencement of the present war, not the wisdom of our government, or the public spirit of our representatives; since it seems to have been their business to discourage, burthen, and repress that spirit and industry by all the means within their power.

But, that there is a term beyond which taxation cannot be extended, without destroying itself, and the people upon whom it is exercised;
and

and that it is the opinion of many of our ablest speculators, that it has nearly, if not altogether, reached that point in this nation.

That it will be necessary not to render the condition of the laborious classes of mankind too miserable in this kingdom, lest they should migrate to the neighbouring countries, many of which appear to be adopting sounder principles of policy, in respect to civil and religious liberty, and particularly to America. And that all laws to prevent migrations are as nugatory as those which tend to prevent the exportation of bullion; since industry will always attract gold, and liberty men.

That perhaps the most salutary event for this nation, would be the sinking the whole national debt at once, by stated equitable proportions, as the Americans have done their paper-money; or should that appear too violent a measure, to lay a general tax upon every species of property both real and personal for its gradual reduction, giving the people the most inviolable securities, either by erecting a tribunal of their own choosing, and under their immediate and absolute controul, or by some other method that shall be adopted by them collectively, not by the representatives of Cornish boroughs and deserted farm-houses, for the faithful application of such a tax.

That if the people are to have no redress in
respect

respect to the mutilated state of their representation, it might be of considerable service to institute public examinations for members of parliament before they take their seats, and to require certificates of their having wisely and honestly managed their own property, before they take upon them to dispose of that of others. And that a knowledge of the first principles of commerce and agriculture, with the laws and resources of his country, is almost as necessary a qualification in a public character, as an acquaintance with gaming, painting, fiddling, and the *sçavoir vivre*.

And lastly, that if the people of England expect redress of their wrongs, or alleviation of their sufferings, they must take the trouble of attending to their own affairs ; and not expect that either ministers or representatives will be wiser and honefter than themselves.

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